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A MEETING OF THE EARL OF ABERDEEN'S CABINET IN 1854.  
*From an engraving by William Walker, after Sir John Gilbert, R.A.*

# ST STEPHEN'S IN THE FIFTIES

THE SESSION 1852-3

*A PARLIAMENTARY RETROSPECT*

BY

EDWARD MICHAEL WHITTY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

JUSTIN M'CARTHY

AND NOTES BY

H. M. W.



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## INTRODUCTION

*per. 211*

THIS book is a living picture of the political scenes, events and persons its author set himself to describe. The volume is made up of a series of letters written in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons and supplied for the most part to the *Leader* newspaper during 1852 and 1853. The *Leader* newspaper was for a long time one of the most brilliant among our London weekly journals, and there was an air of almost audacious independence and originality about it which gave it a peculiar attraction even for readers who did not share its opinions on most public questions. The volume to which I am offering this introduction is a re-publication of a small book entitled *History of the Session 1852-1853: A Parliamentary Retrospect*, published for the author by John Chapman, 142 Strand. The very name of this publisher will call up interesting recollections in the minds of those who, like me, were living students of events and men in the days when this *Parliamentary Retrospect* was given to the public. John Chapman was for many years the editor as well as the publisher of the *Westminster Review*. He succeeded in the editorship no less a man than John Stuart Mill, and was the close and intimate friend of George Henry Lewes and George Eliot. A second edition of the book was published shortly after by Messrs Trübner & Company, under the title, *The Derbyites and the Coalition*.

The *Parliamentary Retrospect* deals with the history of the famous Coalition Administration under the Lord

Aberdeen of that day, the Administration which gave the opportunity for Mr Gladstone as its Chancellor of the Exchequer to secure his first great combined triumph as financier and orator. The author of the articles that make up this volume appears to have dashed off his descriptive and critical essays with almost as much rapidity as a war correspondent of the present day has to display when preparing on the battlefield itself the narrative which is to be sent along the wires of the telegraph. The effect of that very rapidity is to give in the one instance as well as in the other the idea of a living reality to the pictures it puts into words. The author of these letters differs, however, from the war correspondent in the fact that he is above all things else a satirist. He describes the ways and the doings of each House of Parliament in a spirit of utter irreverence, and he criticises the measures and the men and even the manners in the style of one who is much more inclined to mockery than to adulation. He is a remarkably brilliant writer and a happy master of epigrammatic epithet and phrase, and his letters would be well worth reading if only because of their mere literary skill. He has little respect for the House of Commons, as it then existed, and no respect whatever for the House of Lords.

The reader therefore at once begins to see that he is studying the work of a satirist and that he must make allowance for the satirist's frequent exaggeration. Still we all know that even avowed and professed satire is often of high value in enabling us to arrive at a fair and reasonable idea concerning the objects of the satire. The modern student of Juvenal may come to the conclusion that there is much of exaggeration in some of Juvenal's description of the life of his own time, and may yet be ready to admit that these very exaggerations can help him to understand how great may have been the political and

social evils which made such exaggeration possible and acceptable. Much the same may be said of this *Parliamentary Retrospect*. The present-day reader will not fail to derive profit from the perusal of its pages merely because he can see from the very beginning that the House of Commons or even the House of Lords cannot have been at that time an assemblage for the most part utterly ridiculous in its ways of conducting the affairs of the nation. For beneath all the exaggeration there is a substantial proportion of just criticism and it has to be remembered that many of the defects on which our author was most severe have been removed by better systems since the days of 1852 and 1853. The House of Commons in those days was not in any sense representative of the people of these islands. The great majority of the population had no voice whatever in the election of the men supposed to represent them in the House of Commons and the conditions of qualification, which still prevailed, did not allow even those who could vote to give their vote always for the men whom they would if they could have sent to speak for them in the so-called representative assembly. There was immense waste of time in the manner of conducting public business—there is much waste of time even yet in the parliamentary methods for getting through the parliamentary work—but there have been many great improvements effected in that direction since the publication of this volume, and it is only fair to say that many of these improvements are demanded and foreshadowed by this emphatic writer. I can therefore confidently recommend him as a satirist who, whatever his exaggerations, was almost always on the right side, so far as principle and practice are concerned, and as a satirist who seems to have worked with a sincere desire for the improvement of our Parliaments and for the benefit of our people.

The author makes much play with the familiar saying, very familiar in his time, that the House of Commons was the best club in London. He amuses himself and amuses his readers by habitually calling it a "club," and discussing its goings-on as if it were a club and nothing more or better. He assumes it to be quite natural that the arrival of the dinner hour should put an end to all serious work and even serious debate until the leading members have had ample time to enjoy their banquet, and that the social interval, one just then of considerable length, should be regarded as the prescribed opportunity and the only opportunity for dull members to make speeches who could not at any other time have had a chance of delivering their orations and getting them reported in their local newspapers. In his more serious moods he professes not to understand why Parliament should only meet for a few months of each year and why, if it really desires to perform efficiently the business of the whole state, it should not adopt something more like the ways of genuine business concerns, and, while allowing itself ample holidays, submit to the continuance of its work during the remainder of each year. Our readers, of course, know well that since that time alterations have been made with regard to the dinner hour—alterations which I would fain hope may prove of some benefit to the practical discharge of business in the House, but we have not yet got on to the idea that the House of Commons might be induced to extend its time of working beyond the close of the summer season. However that may be, it is only fair to say that the author was then urging, even in his most satirical passages, the necessity and the possibility of some real improvement in the methods of conducting the business of the State, and that we may thoroughly sympathise with his purpose and not allow ourselves to grow too much out of temper because



of his sparkling satire and his occasional bursts of extravagant censure.

I have offered these observations not as any manner of apology for a writer who probably would have felt little pleased by any manner of apology, but merely to point to the fact that his very exaggeration had always something to excuse if not to justify it. I remember once being present many years ago in the green-room of a famous London theatre when the late Charles Mathews, one of the most brilliant light comedians who ever adorned the London stage, was endeavouring to reconcile certain differences of opinion between some of the ladies of his company. The dispute had been rather sharp but was at last brought to a seeming agreement. Then when Mathews and I were left alone, he remarked to me in his tone of quiet humour, that if women were only as reasonable as men, this world might be an earthly paradise, but he added, "the dear creatures, even when they are right, are right in a wrong sort of way." I feel much inclined to apply this judgment in an inverted sense to the author of the *Parliamentary Retrospect*, when he criticises and condemns some of the ways of Parliament in his time, and to maintain that even when he is wrong he is wrong in a right sort of way.

It is interesting as an evidence of the author's sincerity to study the manner in which his estimate of the men he is called upon to describe is sometimes almost prophetic of their career, and how he can see the man of the future before the general opinion of the House and what is called Society has yet appreciated such promise. At the time when he is writing the position to be attained by Richard Cobden, for instance, had not yet been thoroughly realised outside the range of Cobden's own followers. In one of the very early letters there is a passage which I think well worthy of quotation here:—

“Mr Cobden talks out his beliefs in the sharp, clear, crisp sentences that delight a public meeting; and in talking these, he trusts to accident for a following—for the response, which response he does not expect in the House itself. Very likely the House feels that the response will be heard some years hence; but the House has as little to do with the men before the age, as with the men behind the age.”

In this passage the author illustrates the belief often expressed in his pages that the average opinion of the House of Commons is not frequently the surest gauge of rising influence, and that the outer world has sometimes recognised rising greatness before it was appreciated by the average Member of Parliament. These studies begin with the opening of Gladstone's unrivalled career as a Minister of Finance, with the growing influence of John Bright and with the earliest recognition by the House of Disraeli as a rising parliamentary power. Our author seems to have begun his task with a certain prejudice against each of these three men, and especially against Mr Bright, whom he appears at first to have regarded as the mere mouth-piece of Manchester's tradesmanship uplifted into notoriety by provincial applause. But from the moment when he comes to hear Bright deliver one of his great speeches on some important question, a complete change is made in his estimate of the man, and he at once sets down Bright as one of the greatest and most genuine orators of the English Parliament. Nothing could exceed the warmth of the evidently sincere and enthusiastic admiration which he feels for John Bright's eloquence, and there was not time enough for him to have been converted to this judgment by the influence of growing opinion all around him. He proves himself clearly to be a man who can change his view the moment he sees good reason for doing so, and will not allow his

premature judgment of yesterday to obscure or pervert his judgment of to-day.

The present-day reader who cannot carry his memory far back into our parliamentary movements may naturally think that no remarkable keenness of political insight was needed to enable any listener in a gallery of the House of Commons to appreciate from the first the genius and the influence of Cobden and Bright, but in the days of this *Parliamentary Retrospect* the average, or it might be called the vulgar opinion of London and of most London newspapers, still set down what was called the Manchester school of politics as made up for the most part of unlettered and dangerous demagogues. London clubs and London literary circles were not exactly the schools from which just then our author could have borrowed his estimates of Richard Cobden and John Bright. There is something of the same effect to be observed in his growing appreciation of Gladstone and even of Disraeli. It will be remembered that during many years after his first entrance into the House of Commons the author of *Vivian Grey* had been looked upon merely as a sort of curiosity, and was commonly accepted even on his own side of the House, as a more or less fantastic literary adventurer who had taken to political life with the object of finding sport in a new field. But about the time when the *Leader* was publishing the letters of which this volume is a re-issue, Disraeli was growing to be regarded as a very capable politician and as one of the most brilliant debaters in the House, probably unrivalled there in the skill of pointed and epigrammatic satire. The contributor to the *Leader* appears to have very promptly accepted this view of Disraeli's capacity and to have made up his mind to the conviction that the brilliant author of *Vivian Grey* was destined to become a power in the political life of England.

Still he never becomes a genuine enthusiast about Disraeli as he frankly does about Bright and about Gladstone. He saw at once that in Gladstone England had got the greatest Chancellor of the Exchequer she had ever known and also one of her greatest parliamentary orators.

Our author seems to me to have never thoroughly appreciated Lord John Russell. The imperfections of Russell's style and manner as a debater, the lack of fire not to say the actual chilliness which made itself felt during his parliamentary speeches would seem to have prevailed so much over the critic as to deaden him to all appreciation of Lord John Russell's keen power of argument and frequent force and piquancy of expression. But even those who take a much higher view of Lord John Russell's skill in parliamentary debate will recognise the evident sincerity of this critic who goes almost so far as to admit frankly that he cannot get over Lord John Russell's manner and that he is conscious of not being able to appreciate fully the real man. As to Lord Palmerston, the writer seems to me to have formed in anticipation the estimate which students of our political history would generally accept at the present time. He saw in Lord Palmerston the successful manager of a party, a debater of ready versatile and almost inexhaustible skill, but not a great statesman and not in the higher sense of the words a parliamentary orator. It must be admitted that the three men in whom the writer took the deepest interest are also the three men in whom subsequent generations have taken the deepest interest, and it may be added that although he admired Disraeli he did not put him as a parliamentary orator on a level with Gladstone and Bright. There is something especially interesting about the writer's evident sincerity and the manner in which he allows us to follow the movements of his mind from day to day. He never seems to be

disturbed by any fear lest some criticism which he offered in a former letter may be inconsistent with the opinion which he is now offering, and he allows us to understand that he is always willing to change his opinions whenever he finds good reasons for changing them. He surveys the parliamentary battle as Walter Scott's Rebecca watches the strife on the field of blood, and he tells his readers, as Rebecca tells Ivanhoe, just what he sees at each critical moment, although the fortunes of the field may change again and again and thus involve the description in successive contradictions. These pages are therefore always alive and we feel ourselves compelled for the moment to see the events and the men they describe through the eyes of him who is endeavouring to describe them.

The fashion of journalism at the time when our author was throwing off those vivid letters appears to have sanctioned a freedom of criticism and of sarcasm which is hardly to be found in any of the journals of our day, except perhaps in professedly comic journals. I do not mean that there is any freedom of speech in our author which could hurt the feelings of even the most sensitive reader, but that when he believes some Member of Parliament is making himself ridiculous he describes him fully and frankly as a ridiculous personage. There is in occasional instances an outspoken determination to make it quite clear in what way the censured member of the House is making himself ridiculous. We learn more than once—it is narrated to us simply as a matter of fact—that this particular member is drunk at the time when he is endeavouring to address the House of Commons. Now we may, if we feel so inclined, argue that a writer for a public journal ought to have decorously closed his eyes and his ears to any evidence of such condition given by a Member of Parliament, but I am



afraid we cannot seriously argue that our writer must have been mistaken as to the condition of those whom he set himself thus frankly to describe. There is certainly something on which the present generation may fairly be allowed to congratulate itself in the fact that the House of Commons does not now give much opportunity for similar comment on any of its members even during the most exciting of its debates.

Those of us who can remember, as I can, the House of Commons at the time this volume pictures it, must be compelled to admit that there hardly ever took place a night's debate then and for many Sessions after during which some members did not make it evident by the manner of their speeches that they had been stimulating their nerves and screwing up their courage a good deal too much at the expense of the bottle or the decanter. Even the most critical observer of the House of Commons in our present days must admit, if he knows anything of the past, that the House has made important reforms in its drinking ways as well as in its electoral franchises. We have had indeed in late years many passionate and disorderly scenes during the debates of the Commons, and on one memorable occasion blows have actually been interchanged, and more than once the utmost efforts of the authorities of the House had to be exerted before the disturbers of its benches and floor could be restored to order. But it is something to know that these disturbances came from sudden unforeseen outbursts of passion, were events of the rarest occurrence, and could not be taken as offering any illustration of the House in its habitual ways. In the former days it might be said without exaggeration that hardly a night passed without giving the public some exhibition of a drunken member amusing his audience by trying to take part in a debate. We all know that in the days of Pitt and Fox and

Sheridan such exhibitions were much more common than even at the time pictured by this *Parliamentary Retrospect*, and we may therefore soothe ourselves with the well-sustained conviction that a steady and regular improvement in that way at least is making itself manifest throughout the conditions of our parliamentary life.

Our author, it will be seen, is never much restrained by any feelings of reverence towards the majority of the men whom he is describing or even towards the institution of which they form a part, but the readers of the present day may take it for granted that where he is sincerely censorious his censure does not come from any pleasure in finding fault, but has some serious ground some genuine grievance to stimulate and even to justify it. Irish readers, who have only had an opportunity of making themselves acquainted with Irish parties as we know them at the present day, will be a good deal shocked at first when they come upon the words in which our author describes some of the Irish party of his time. But it has to be remembered that our author is describing some of the Irish members during the rule of the once famous or infamous body of men, a very few in number, who were led by Sadleir and Keogh; a party whose power lasted but for a very short time and ended with the suicide of Sadleir on Hampstead Heath. Even at the time when the Sadleir and Keogh party still maintained itself in the House of Commons, the author never makes the mistake of mingling up other Irish Nationalist members with the few who accepted its ignoble leadership. We find, for instance, that in this *Parliamentary Retrospect* such men as Charles Gavan Duffy, John Francis Maguire, and George Henry Moore are always spoken of in terms of honourable recognition and respect, although they were conspicuously and unchangingly representative of Ireland's religious and political

principles. This fact, and it is a fact illustrated throughout the whole volume in its dealings with political parties, is in itself enough to show that the writer was never influenced by the mere desire to throw ridicule and scorn on any body of men whose political views did not recommend themselves to his sympathies. Even when dealing with the English statesmen for whom he professes the highest admiration he does not give to each of them a like measure of unstinted praise. We know that the three men maintaining leading positions in the House of Commons whom the author most admires are Gladstone, Disraeli and Bright, and yet it is seen again and again in the clearest manner that he never puts Mr Disraeli as an orator on a level with these two other men, or classifies him as a financial statesman with Mr Gladstone. I should like to quote, in order to justify my statement the following sentences from the passage concerning the debate on Gladstone's Budget:—

“It has even ceased to be amusing to watch Mr Disraeli's inconsistencies; or one might go with some pleasure, if it were not so exhausted a one, to hear Mr Disraeli denounce a Legacy Duty (to be balanced by reductions in customs and excise) and a continuous income tax, after having re-issued *Sybil*. But wondering reflections upon the career of Mr Disraeli are out of date; and as he and the party seem satisfied—they taking their statesman as they take their cook—Disraeli in the House and Palanque at the Carlton—and both *chefs* content if they succeed in stimulating the jaded appetites of their employers—the public has nothing to do with the arrangement. The criticism, however, is legitimate that Disraeli is very dull of late. We know that he can be humorous and lively on a Budget—on Mr Gladstone's he is only and unhappily argumentative; insisting on being severely logical, and yet not having a word to say against



the most perfect financial scheme of our times; and his own genius in such encounters being completely overshadowed by that of Mr Gladstone, who, in the first place, is far more closely master of his subject, and can speak financial essays, as distinguished from 'financial exertations.'"

I have thought it worth while to introduce this quotation in order to justify my appreciation at once of the author's sincerity and of his keen critical judgment. Disraeli is one of the very few men of mark then in the House of Commons for whom the author warms up into genuine enthusiasm. Yet we can see how clearly and justly he is enabled to distinguish between Gladstone and Disraeli as financial Ministers and constructors of Budgets, not merely as regards the substantial value of the scheme brought out by either, but also as regards the skill in debate and the eloquence of exposition which each displayed in the carrying out of his work. This faculty is indeed characteristic of the author through the whole of this volume, and ought to make the book of great value for the instruction of readers to whom Disraeli and Bright and Gladstone are now little more than a fame. My own acquaintance as a young outside observer began with the period when these letters were making their appearance in the columns of the *Leader*, and I was able from the outside and also from the inside of parliamentary life to follow these three parliamentary careers to their close. I feel therefore some gratification in being able to confirm, so far as my own observation and judgment can warrant such a confirmation, the fidelity and the success which are shown in nearly all of the more important instances by our usually sarcastic and disparaging critic in his judgment of public men. This is the quality which makes his work what I have already called a living picture. Not many writers even among really accomplished and

distinguished writers can make us feel that we are looking upon actual men and movements while we are merely reading a few passages from the columns of a newspaper.

The author closes his volume with a passage which I feel inclined to quote partly as a specimen of his peculiar style and partly because it is an effective example of the manner in which he endeavours to turn the very extravagance of his satire to wholesome account.

“If in a week or two we have not altogether forgotten the session, placidly reposing in our constitutional recess, which was invented by our ancestors for good reasons, but is maintained by ourselves for none, we shall remember it only for one feature, that it was the session in which Parliament and people alike confessed—a confession apart from the question of Parliamentary Reform—that the House of Commons is elected by a constituency, two-thirds of which are utterly base and corrupt, the proofs of that baseness and corruption being ample and complete. And, remembering this remarkable fact, we shall wonder at the easy, happy confidence we have placed so long, and are likely so long to continue to place, in that assembly; and we shall also wonder, perhaps, at our own profound conviction that we are an enlightened nation, far away at the head of the world’s civilisation. But no doubt we are very practical; we are content with our constitution, and so satisfied with our self-government that we are rejoicing at the prospect of having no control whatever over the Government until next February.”

No one could have known better than the author that the English people, and I may add the Irish, Scottish and Welsh people as well, were anything but content with their political constitution or satisfied with the parliamentary government. The author indeed was doing his honest best in all his letters to make the people of these islands less and less content with the working of the parlia-

mentary system and more and more eager to secure its thorough reform. Even the placid contempt with which he assumes that we do not trouble ourselves to look out the defects in our system could only act as a new stimulant to us and quicken us to the very needed task of reform. Satire itself is one of the best instruments of reform in the moral and social as well as the political constitution, and it would only be doing our author the barest justice to admit that even in his moods of satirical exaggeration he is striving to shock and startle us into the work of self-improvement. Among all the many reforms introduced into the representative system since the publication of these letters there is not one, so far as I can observe, which has not been foreshadowed in the writer's vivid and humorous pages. Many reforms are still to come, but we may feel assured that they will be for the most part further developments in the same direction, further expansion in the fields of political culture.

Not a few changes have taken place in the ways and manners of the House of Commons since the days when our author was studying them on the spot. I should like to know for instance what he would have thought of the development in parliamentary ways which has converted the Terrace of the Houses of Parliament into a summer garden for the occupants of the Ladies' Gallery! In one of its peculiarities the Ladies' Gallery of the House of Commons belongs to a more distant era than that of the House of Lords. The Peers allow a woman to sit in an open gallery while the Commoners still enclose her in a dark room behind a grating and affect not to be even conscious of her presence. But in recent days they have at least encouraged her to convert the Terrace of Westminster Palace not merely into a garden but actually into a tea-garden, and there on any summer evening whole

crowds of brightly-dressed women are entertained by members of the House whose constituencies are perhaps under the fond impression that their representatives are just then absorbed in the business of the empire. We know, however, that there is a considerable proportion of members who are only too glad of getting a chance of addressing the House at a time when there is the least possible competition for such opportunities, but when there is at the same time a good prospect of being reported in the local newspapers. Therefore I think it may be fairly contended that apart from all other considerations the attractions of the ladies on the Terrace may enable many a member to get his speech spoken who might not otherwise have a chance of catching the Speaker's eye. There are, however, more effective and important evidence of women's increasing influence in our political world than could be found in any genial and fashionable gatherings of the ladies on the Terrace. I should like to know what the author of the *Parliamentary Retrospect* would have thought, were he living to study the subject, of the growth of women's influence in our political affairs. Not long after the publication of his letters a famous phrase was employed in a London weekly newspaper to describe the class of women who were then beginning to demand the rights of citizenship for their sex. These women were described as "the Shrieking Sisterhood." The title was conferred on them by a woman writer and it became a familiar phrase for several seasons. I am glad to believe that the phrase has long since ceased to have any influence over rational human beings and that the steady interest which women now take in political work and the influence which they have come to exert openly over our political movements is recognised almost universally as healthful, strengthening and elevating. I still hope and trust that the clear,

penetrating common sense of our author would have led him to admit that woman has something to do in the outer life of the world more than that which is concerned with the wearing of handsome dresses and the maintenance or modification of fashion's laws. We have now a great organised and recognised movement for the admission of women to vote in political elections under the same established qualifications as those which are required for the voting of men, and I do not think it needs much of the prophetic gift to foresee that the time is not far distant when such a political change will become a part of our constitution.

I do not propose to follow the subject any farther just now, and I have only been tempted thus far by a curious consideration as to the side of the controversy which our author would have taken if he had had any opportunity of studying it as a living reality. Since his days we have had all manner of changes in our political working system and, so far as I can see, they have all tended in the direction which he would have advocated, his peculiar characteristic being that he urged us to do right by ridiculing us for our persistency and stupidity in doing wrong. During the author's time the principle of vote by ballot at parliamentary elections was only the subject of an annual motion brought on in the House of Commons by some member of much advanced views, who was generally regarded as belonging to the order of well-meaning and harmless political eccentrics. About the same time anything approaching towards universal suffrage was looked upon by most steady-going persons as the immediate precursor to a Red Republic, and now we know that the poorest working man may be enabled to secure a vote, and that the throne and altar seem still to be holding their own. One of the most remarkable and, thus far, the most successful and most promising events of our time,



has been the success of the Labour movement, the organisation of the working classes into a distinct political institution for the removal of all restrictions and barriers set up against the citizenship of the working classes in town and country. Many years had passed away after the publication of this *Parliamentary Retrospect* when four men belonging to what we commonly describe as the working class were elected under recent suffrage reforms to represent constituencies in the House of Commons. I can well remember having listened with amused interest to the many expressions of wonder and alarm which this sudden change in our parliamentary system brought about among steady-going politicians of the more ancient school. It may be taken as an evidence that our political world has made much advance in its intelligence, even since those comparatively recent days, that the return to the House of Commons of nearly forty Labour members has not created anything like the same feeling of wonder and alarm which the presence of those four precursors of the movement did at the earlier and yet comparatively recent period. But I am disposed to believe that if when the four Labour members first took their places on the benches of the representative chamber some audacious prophet had foretold that a man belonging to the same order as these four men would before many years had passed be a leading member of a British Cabinet, be at the head of a most important department, and would be described as the "Right Honourable," some even among the alarmists would have regarded the prophet as trying too far the limits of human credulity.

But I am not able to regard the author of the *Parliamentary Retrospect* as belonging to the order of political observer who could have found anything but material for good hope in the fact that a Labour party, made up of working men, had obtained election to the

House of Commons. His comments on public affairs, even when they are most satirical and most disparaging, are guided by an entirely different sort of inspiration. His humour and sometimes perhaps his ill-humour will be found to play in this volume on the anomalies of our parliamentary system which were obstructions in the way of practical good sense, of civil equality and of intellectual and political progress. We have seen that he could be a prophet of reform even while apparently in the mood to describe the English Parliament and the public generally as too stupid and lethargic to be aroused to any conviction as to the necessity of reform or indeed any interest whatever in the whole subject. I should think that the ordinary reader in the days when these letters were making their weekly appearance must have thought the writer an extremely disagreeable, unpatriotic and un-English sort of person who out of a delight in mere sarcasm loved to hold his countrymen up to the ridicule of foreign countries. Now that, after a lapse of so many years and the introduction of so many reforms, these letters are republished, I think the reader will feel grateful even for the frequent severity of their sarcasm, and will fully understand that the author wrote in that way because he believed it to be the best way of stirring his countrymen up to the work which they ought to undertake, and because he believed they were fully capable of accomplishing the work, if only they could be goaded on to an earnest effort at its accomplishment.

The new issue of this volume—its third edition in fact—which Mr Fisher Unwin has undertaken, will make its appearance at a most opportune period. A fresh chapter is unquestionably about to open in the constitutional history of these islands. The old classifications of Whig and Tory have long since ceased to have any rigid

representation in our political life. We have seen popular reform measures introduced by Tory Governments and we have seen—even the author of the *Parliamentary Retrospect* had seen—needed measures of parliamentary reform opposed by Whig Administrations. More lately still the designations Liberal and Conservative have ceased to express in any clear and satisfactory sense the character of the two opposing parties. The Liberal of former days is the Radical of to-day; while he who once proudly accepted the title of Conservative will now no longer admit that he accepts the policy of conserving everything merely because he happens to find it conserved thus far. He generally prefers to range himself among the advocates of some measure of reaction against the established fiscal policy. Now I have already said, more than once, that our author has pointed out in many instances the direction which progress in this or that path of reform was sure to take, merely because he felt convinced that such was the direction which it ought to take, and he had faith enough in the growing good sense of the country to believe that such reforms must sooner or later come to pass. There was one event which he never seemed to dread even in his most dissatisfied and despondent moods, and that was the appearance of any political party, whether calling itself Conservative or not, which proclaimed as its object a reaction against the tariff system of Sir Robert Peel and Gladstone, or Cobden and Bright. I do not intend to enter any further into speculation as to the prospects of that political party which may perhaps be described, since the late General Election, as professing the doctrines of Birmingham. I only make the passing comment that among the anticipations of our author with regard to coming changes, which have since his time borne by their coming their testimony to his



foresight, the idea never seems to have entered his head that there was any possibility of such a movement as that of which Birmingham was the headquarters at the late General Election.

One of the results which may be expected to come from the presence and the influence of a strong Labour party in the new House of Commons will be some genuine attempt to make the business arrangements of the House more suitable to the work of the country. The new House of Commons has not only a proportion of working men among its members, such as was never seen there before and such as would have been believed impossible a generation ago, but it has also a greatly increased proportion of busy men belonging to all orders, men who have to make a living by daily work at the Bar and various other steady regular occupations. The benches of the House will no longer be mainly occupied by the scions of noble families, by country squires, by financial magnates, and by the heads of great trading firms. The majority of the House as it will now be composed, and as it is likely henceforward always to be composed, will be made up of men with whom the saving of time is a matter of ever present interest. Now there cannot be the slightest doubt that in the House of Commons thus far there has always been a waste of time in the manner of getting through public business for which it cannot be above the power of human intelligence to find a remedy. It seems to me, for instance, that in much of what is called the Committee work of the House itself there is some, and even obvious room for improvement.

I am not now speaking of the work which is done in the Committee Rooms upstairs, but with that stage of each measure which comes on in the House itself when after the second reading of a Bill the House goes into

Committee, as it is called, and sets about discussing the details of the Bill clause by clause and indeed very often sentence by sentence. When this stage has been reached the Speaker leaves the Chair and the debate is presided over by the Chairman of Committees seated at a table which stands on the floor of the House. Then the House is in Committee and every member present may speak as often as he thinks fit in the course of the debate. It has always seemed to me that not only is much time wasted in this discussion of details, as all the main principles of a measure have already been fully discussed and practically settled by the time the second reading has passed, but that the result is to give an immense temptation to speakers who would otherwise have little chance of obtaining a hearing in the House but are now enabled to speak as often as they feel so inclined and even with our recent modified rules are not easily to be declared out of order. The rules of the House do in our time admit the power, not known to a former generation, of bringing a debate to a prompt close by a definite proposition and a vote, but even with this ultimate protection against mere waste of time it is certain that a great deal of time is wasted each Session by the process of discussing the details of a measure in Committee of the whole House. It would seem clear enough that, while the general principles and the main purposes and limitations of a measure can only be satisfactorily arranged by the whole House, the mere working details of the Bill could be much more readily and also more effectively manipulated by a Select Committee. It is highly probable that some changes of this nature will be made in our parliamentary procedure when the influence of our expanded and comprehensive system of representation has come to deal with the adjustment of parliamentary business. I feel a

strong conviction also that some alteration will be made as to the parliamentary seasons of work and seasons of holiday, and that while the legislators may be given ample intervals of rest from their wearying labours, the custom will not be permitted to prevail which allows the year to be divided into only two seasons, half the year devoted to diurnal labour and the other half presented to members as a complete holiday.

With regard to the House of Lords I do not feel that it would be suitable for me to enter into any consideration of the reforms which are needed and are likely to be undertaken in the working of our hereditary chamber. I am afraid that the space which the introduction to a volume might reasonably claim would hardly be equal to the exposition of my views on that subject. The reader will find many expressions of opinion set forth by the author of this volume as to the manner in which the House of Lords conducts its business, and he will find some emphatic suggestions, also, as to the necessity for improvement and the way of bringing it about. Here too I think the reader will be likely to admit that there was something of prophetic fury in the utterances of the observant journalist.

I am not disposed to recommend this volume to the public merely because of its value in having helped to light the way to improvements since accomplished in our parliamentary system, or of its possible effect in now lighting the way to still further improvements. The book has an abiding value as well as a keen interest because of the living reality with which it reproduces the time, the scenes and the men. It is in that way a most useful companion to the fuller and the graver history of the earlier part of Queen Victoria's reign. Much light is thrown upon the history of almost every book-producing

age and country by the diaries and the gossiping correspondence of men and women who mixed in Society and made note of what they saw and heard there. Such books are the delight of all readers who study, for instance, the story of England as it came out in the days of Charles II. or in the days of the Georges. But even in the days of the Georges we have no such close, continuous narrative-description of the men and the doings in the Houses of Parliament during week after week. We are enabled to obtain from many sources a clear idea of what the great men of the political period were like, of how they spoke in Parliament and what effect they produced, and how the leader of the House replied to the leader of the Opposition, but we get no real idea whatever as to the general ways of the two Houses or as to the style and success of many men who made at least a passing mark, although they never came into the foremost rank of political life. The author of this volume brings back to life many men—scores of men in fact—whom our days have almost forgotten, but who in their own days often excited the keen interest, whether admiring or hostile, of the House and the public; who promised or threatened at the time to have a following and to make a mark, and about whom we of the twentieth century know and care little or nothing.

Some captious critic might contend that if the men were not able to make themselves famous, posterity does not want to know anything about them. This, however, seems to me a mere mistake. It must be interesting to the student of English parliamentary history to know what sort of men these were; how they spoke; how they conducted themselves; what was their bearing; what were their pretensions; whether they had actually made themselves for a time serious and apparently important

opponents or rivals of Disraeli, or Lord John Russell; whether they had succeeded in obtaining Ministerial office or if they advocated in the House of Commons the claims of parties then popular out-of-doors and now not filling any place in our political records. Then it has to be observed that at the time while this volume was in process of creation the newspapers of the day in London were each of them the avowed organ of the different political parties and none of them was in the least likely to give to its readers an impartial criticism of rising or sinking public men. The *Leader* was a weekly journal which professed an absolute independence both of parties and of men in its criticisms, and these sketches of parliamentary life were new and absolutely unique in the freedom of their descriptions.

Here then was an observer of the keenest order, a thoroughly independent critic, a satirist by inclination but at the same time a man capable of feeling and expressing the most genuine enthusiasm; a man of high intellect and a most liberal education. He brought into existence a style of newspaper correspondence unknown to the journalism of his time, and it must indeed have called for some courage on the part of the *Leader's* editor and proprietor to give to the world such a series of descriptive letters from the Press Gallery of the House of Commons. The whole volume is one which seems to me to have a high political and historical, as well as literary, value, and I can therefore cordially recommend it to the reading public of our day and the reading public of days to come. The two editions already published made their appearance in small form and in closely printed lines of diminutive type, which make the reading of it seem, at the first glance, a trying, a difficult, and a repelling operation. The publishers of this latest edition have taken good



care that the eyes and the courage of their readers shall not be put to any such test, and I feel well assured that they will have to be congratulated on the success of their venture.

I feel that I cannot bring this Introduction to a close without calling attention to the fact that the volume itself may now become a most appropriate preliminary study to a work issued in 1897 by the publishing house of T. Fisher Unwin, and to which I had the honour of contributing a Preface. I am writing now of the two volumes entitled, *The Inner Life of the House of Commons*, written by William White, who was for many years a member of the official staff in that House. Mr White's book opens with the March of 1856, while the volume which I am now recommending to the public closes with 1853. It would, therefore, hardly be too much to say that Mr White's volumes take up the story of Parliamentary life very soon after the period when the descriptions given by the author of this volume came to an end. Mr White brings us down to the close of the Session of 1871, and covers a period full of interesting Parliamentary events, which has for its leading figures many of the statesmen and orators, and, it must be added, many of the eccentricities and bores, described with vividness by Mr White's predecessor in the work of Parliamentary illustration. Both writers enjoy a remarkable power of life-like portraiture; both are gifted with a rich vein of humour; both have a suffusing tone of satire, and both are equally and evidently sincere in their desire that the Houses of Parliament should be brought up to the highest possible level of public service. It seems to me very fortunate that the reading public of these countries, and indeed of all civilised countries, should have two such collections of studies from the life of the

English Parliament drawn by two such masters of political observation and description who had such constant opportunities of making their studies from the very life. For myself, I can sincerely say that I feel pleasure and pride in having my name associated with the production of two such books, even although mine has been only the easy task of introducing them to the reading world.

JUSTIN M'CARTHY.





## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

*Edward Michael Whitty was born in London in 1827, his father having been born in Wexford. He served an apprenticeship as a reporter on the provincial Press, and coming to London wrote The Times "Parliamentary Summary" from 1846 to 1849. The work reproduced on the following pages appeared in The Leader in 1852-3. A further collection of Whitty's articles in the same paper appeared in 1854 under the title of "The Governing Classes of Great Britain—Political Portraits." This work, it has been truly said, will be read with pleasure and profit by any future historian of the time. It was reissued with additions in 1859. Whitty also wrote a novel called Friends of Bohemia, which appeared in 1857. This contains many brilliant character sketches, not unlike those afterwards produced by Grenville Murray. The book, however, is nearly forgotten now. Whitty went to Belfast in 1857 to edit The Northern Whig, but returned to London in 1858. He emigrated to Australia, and died in Melbourne on the 21st February 1860. Whitty was a Bohemian. He was described under the name of "Ned Wexford" in a paper called "Bohemia and Bohemianism," which appeared in The Cornhill Magazine in 1865 and was written by James Hannay.*

H. M. W.

*The notes to the original edition of this work are those enclosed in brackets.*

# Hints to New M.P.'s<sup>1</sup>

## I

AN argument invariably used by our great statesmen against the proposition of annual Parliaments and of triennial Parliaments is, that it takes, at the very least, two sessions to acclimate a new Member to the moral atmosphere of the House. Perhaps the argument is a very weak one, since the atmosphere of the House may be very deficient in moral oxygen, from too much using up; and since the rough vigour of new brooms, provided the supply of new brooms can be kept up, may be worth more than the symmetrical and leisurely sweeping of practised and somewhat scrubby besoms. But the argument, at least, shows that there is an understood supposition that the new Member is but a "Fuchs," or "Freshman," for a year or two after taking the oaths: that a Peel, if a Fuchs, is a less desirable legislator than a Sibthorp,<sup>2</sup> if a seasoned "Bursch"; and with the sense that you are all, therefore, in everybody's estimation, a set of rather ridiculous green-horns, you may be disposed, having had a week or two to recover from the intoxication of your senatorial glories, to listen deferentially to the hints of an experienced "stranger," who, as one of the public, and in his House of Commons capacity, is interested in your good behaviour. Doubtless there is a species of wisdom to be learned only by

<sup>1</sup> [The issue of these papers was commenced on the 14th August 1852, and continued weekly. All the articles of the series are, however, not given in this republication.]

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Sibthorp, the eccentric M.P. for Lincoln. *Punch* called him "Mother Goose of Lincoln."

## 2 ST STEPHEN'S IN THE FIFTIES

repeatedly playing the fool ; and a perfect " Guide to the House of Commons " would no more turn a raw Jones at once into a Tom Duncombe<sup>1</sup> (the greatest tactician who ever sat in the House), or an unknown Smith into a Ralph Bernal,<sup>2</sup> suavest and keenest of all chairmen of Committees than a map of Paris would teach an Alderman good French. But the House of Commons has its esoteric and exoteric faiths and faces ; and if the neophytes get a few " wrinkles " as they approach the threshold, they may be able to pass muster very much sooner than they or their constituents could reasonably have expected, among the venerable priests, in the *adytum*, who have blundered their own way to initiation. People who study the " Reports " have no more idea of the House of Commons than the reader of a newspaper criticism on an Adelphi performance has of the Adelphi *troupe*. The House is a great theatre, with its green-room as well as its stage. It is a great club, all in all, in itself and to itself, with its own heroes, its own way of thought, and its own way of talk. Cut off from the mass of the nation by the restricted suffrage whence it proceeds, and compelled, by its forms, and the presence of Ministers of the Crown, to follow official ends, the English House of Commons is in no respect a " popular assembly " ; and no man will succeed in it who does not remember that fact. Ah ! but, says Jones, I come from three hundred thousand people, and I'll talk at the nation over the head of the Speaker. Anterior Joneses have tried ; and have not only collapsed in the House, but have failed altogether of public good. Reform the House, by all means ; but meanwhile, if you go there, Jones, go to make the most of it as it is, and to manage it to your own ends (otherwise those of your constituents), in spite of it.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, then M.P. for Finsbury. He continued to sit for that borough until his death in 1861. He was an advanced Radical.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Bernal, of Jewish descent, was a member of the House from 1818 to 1852, and Chairman of Committees for twenty years. He died in 1854.

There is one preliminary new men should pay some attention to. Those of the New Members who are not new men, in the sense of being practised to fight through public work in public places, do not need the hint; but it is indispensable for others. There should be a medical examination and a medical certificate for all new men facing the House of Commons. Clearly, great physique is one of the conditions of success in a life of action; and in the modern career of a man who works with his generation, there is more veritable bodily labour than is undergone by a soldier in a campaign. Mark the men who win in public life; and you will see that they are all men of the enduring build. It seems a truism; but very few people observe this, and, at any rate, not one in ten thousand regulates his "choice of life" by a reference to his anatomy. I don't mean big men or broad men. I mean men with large heads (proportionate to the trunk), thick necks, and deep chests. Other sort of men may write great books, or start the ideas for the men of action; but this sort of man only succeeds *in action*. These are the men who "get on" in the world, commercial or political. "Industry," the key to all success, is only endurance; and endurance is a tangible physical quality which no sermons and no personal resolves can convey to a man.

Force and vigour—pluck—are the certain accompaniments of a special general conformation of the hinder part of the head and of the neck; and these qualities are to the forehead—to the thinking and creative qualities—just what the tender is to the locomotive, supplying all the coals. A certain animalism is indispensable to the effect, in moving masses of men, of pure intellectuality; and so true is this, that great defects, so considered abstractedly, of character, are necessary to political leaders—that, in short, the great thinkers, who are great by force of the exclusively pure intellect, cannot succeed in public life at

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all. This is a theory, like most of its kind, to be tested by application to the men around us; and it is worth nothing if it is not true of the prominent leaders in our English politics. The Premier *in esse*<sup>1</sup> and the Premiers *in posse* are certainly illustrations. A Premier reaches his altitude, in these days of oligarchical supremacies, by influence—by impressing himself on those around him; and only the strong, forcible, enduring man is equal to that most enormous and wearying of human labours, diplomatically and assiduously “making friends.” It is not a new distinction, that, between men of thought and men of action—between the official engrossers of Acts of Parliament and the poets who have decreed the truths on which statutes rest; but it is new that the gentlemen who are thinking of the “honour of a seat” need not wait for experience to test their capacity to work out in labour their dreams of a career. They can obtain the knowledge by measuring their anatomies against the current Pitts and Peels of their day.

All this appears only to apply to a very few; since every new M.P. does not aim at being Premier. But it applies to all. It is a question of physique as to the fitness of every man, if fitted in respect to brains, for the wear and tear of popular agitation—House of Commons life being an “agitation,” though now and again, only, “popular.” Certainly, to the man who goes into the House of Commons as he would go into a club, because it is “the right thing” to belong to it, and who contemplates a lounging career of back benches and silence, the specification of any physical condition is needless. Such persons, lordlings and squires, are not fit for public life, because the choice of such a career betrays the want of

<sup>1</sup> Lord Derby, who was defeated in 1852, formed another Ministry in 1858, but was defeated, and resigned in the following year. He again took office in 1866 and passed a Household Suffrage Bill in 1867. He retired from office in 1868, and died in 1869.

common intellect and the absence of common honesty ; and I am speaking in reference to the average new men elected, possessed of presentable ability to judge on plain matters and between competing leaders, and who comfort their conscience with the conviction that they have principles to work out, and that they can be of service to their country.

If they have been at work before they saw the hustings—if they have been barristers, railway royalties, busy merchants, busy not only in the counting-house but in the public business of their localities, they know precisely what amount of physique and what nice care of the best of frames is needed to stand the rush and crush of competitive existence. It is not a question whether the body can “stand it”; it is a question whether the physical nature is such that the man can face, fight with, control, or at least keep abreast of, the crowds of rough, violent, fierce natures to be met in every *mêlée*, small and large, at committees and in public meetings. It is a question not only “Shall I last so many years if I work so hard and live so and so?” but “Am I the sort of man to impress myself and others, and to stand out of the crowd of despised common-place?” That is entirely a question to be answered by the beat of the pulse.

See what the fatigue of public life is—for those who mean to succeed in it. It is a sort of business in which so much work will bring such and such a return. Position in the House of Commons is what Members who are practical men must aim at: and position is only accorded to those who labour hardest. In fact, those who give themselves up to the House entirely, induce the House to give itself up to them. Mr Disraeli<sup>1</sup> has lived in the house for twelve

<sup>1</sup> Disraeli became Premier on the retirement of Lord Derby in 1868, but the result of the general election being adverse, he gave way to Gladstone. He returned to office in 1874, and in 1876 was created Earl of Beaconsfield. He had again to retire from office in 1880, and died in 1887, in his seventy-seventh year.



## 6 ST STEPHEN'S IN THE FIFTIES

sessions. Sir Robert Peel was the "greatest Member of Parliament ever known."<sup>1</sup> Lord John Russell<sup>2</sup> even talks in private with the House of Commons peroratory twang. Mr Hume<sup>3</sup> is liked by both sides and all parties, because in the hottest agitation he was deferential to the House: and because his individual labours have enhanced incalculably the aggregate estimation of the whole body. Among the lesser gods' reward is proportionate to capacity for work. The Wilson Pattens,<sup>4</sup> Ralph Bernal, the Greenes,<sup>5</sup> and the Baineses,<sup>6</sup> and the Thornleys,<sup>7</sup> work for the House, perhaps with results which the public is not directly sensible, in the assortment, privately, of public business; and the reward is not simply in the sense of virtuous jog-trotism, but in the smiles which beam on them on all sides, in the acquiescence shown to all their wishes, in the power granted to them in regard to private bills, and in the setting aside of £1500 a year for chairmen of committees. On the other hand the men who will not identify themselves with the House—who don't sit through debates, who shirk committees, and who talk of their constituents, and give themselves the airs of persons only condescending to be Members—signally fail, either of intimidating the

<sup>1</sup> See Disraeli's *Life of Lord George Bentinck*, a political biography, 3rd edition, chap. xvii., p. 320.

<sup>2</sup> Lord J. Russell, formerly Prime Minister and leader of the Whigs. He served under, in turn, Aberdeen and Palmerston. He was created Earl Russell in 1861. On the death of Palmerston in 1865, he became Prime Minister for the second time, and on the defeat of his Government finally left office in 1866. He died in 1878, aged eighty-six.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Hume entered Parliament in 1812. He represented various constituencies and ultimately Montrose. He died in 1855. He was the great advocate of retrenchment.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson Patten was for a few months Chairman of Committees in 1852. He was created Lord Winmarleigh in 1874, and died in 1892.

<sup>5</sup> Greene, M.P. for Lancaster.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Talbot Baines, the son of Edward Baines, represented Leeds in 1852. He filled various offices. It is said that his special knowledge of the forms of the House pointed him out for the Speakership. His health, however, caused his retirement in 1859.

<sup>7</sup> Thornley, M.P. for Wolverhampton.



Senate or of gratifying themselves. Mr Cobden,<sup>1</sup> for instance, has never adopted the House of Commons style or knack—has never attempted to manage the House; and hence his position in the House in no way reflects his middle-class power out of doors. Mr Bright<sup>2</sup> is generally Member for Manchester—seldom Member of the House—and therefore he is without that power of influencing individually or generally which he should possess.<sup>3</sup> More signal instances may be adduced of the folly of men joining a body they intend to defy. Mr George Thompson<sup>4</sup> was Oh, oh'd, in his first speech, and expressed his indifference to the opinions thus suggested; and he was only heard of afterwards as a failure. O'Connell attempted, in turn, to bully and cajole, and never did anything for Ireland in consequence. And identification with the House is only to be effected by working sedulously with and for the House.

Less work would make fortunes on 'Change, or fame at the Bar. With constituents to satisfy on the one hand, and the stipulations of the House of Commons to meet on the other, there is no rest. Those who have private business as well as public duties to discharge, cannot meet the requirements of their offices, and fall into the second rank of House of Commons heroes; one reason why the lords, squires, and sons of *nouveaux riches*—the great disengaged—beat the Radicals, who have generally private worlds to look after, in legislative racing. Those who

<sup>1</sup> Cobden, then M.P. for the West Riding, retired voluntarily from that constituency, and was defeated at Huddersfield in 1857. He was returned for Rochdale in 1859, and died in 1865.

<sup>2</sup> Bright lost his seat for Manchester in 1857, but was returned for Birmingham in the same year, and continued to sit for that borough until his death in 1888.

<sup>3</sup> [And which, before the Session of 1852-3 was over, he in a marked degree acquired, having greatly changed his style.]

<sup>4</sup> George Thompson was a prominent advocate of the abolition of slavery. In 1847 he was elected for the Tower Hamlets, but lost his seat in 1852. He died in 1878.

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devote themselves to the House of Commons exclusively, to become conspicuous personages, live the hardest of human lives—live such lives, no doubt, because the labour is the excitement they love; but whatever their abstract, intellectual admiration of the function of governing the British Empire, their qualifications for it must be dependent upon the report of their physiologist. Even when men are gifted with the iron frame of a Hume, or a Graham,<sup>1</sup> or a Peel, they must exist by the most stringent rules of feeding—they must treat themselves as trainers treat racers. There was a time when the newspaper report could be—"Mr Sheridan staggered and said"; when Fox would drop in after thirty hours of picquet and talk at fever heat; and when Mr Pitt would be leaning over a basin behind the Speaker's chair, clearing himself of the port, and arranging the argument with which he would, by-and-by, destroy "the talents." But the House of Commons in those days was only a magnificent debating society. In these days, our Russells, and Gladstones, and Disraelis live by a regimen; dull perhaps in proportion as they dwell in rigid decencies; but thus only enabled to humour the genius of the epoch—a decidedly respectable and slow one. A glass of sherry, in our era, might destroy a week's work, or change the fate of a debate. Eighteen hours out of every twenty-four must be sacrificed by all men meaning great results in a brisk world; and none can keep their legs, in such a career, without shunning most of the delights civilisation provides for humanity without a "purpose."

<sup>1</sup> Sir James Graham was Home Secretary in the Peel Ministry. He served under Aberdeen as First Lord of the Admiralty. He resigned in 1855, and never again held office. He died in 1861.

## II

PERHAPS my definition of a "Member of Parliament" may have struck you as being about as complex as Imlac's definition of a poet ; and a stray Rasselas might have closed my last Letter with the exclamation, "Enough! thou hast convinced me no man can ever be an M.P." But definitions such as these are like Sam Slick's rule for shooting coons—they only amount to a suggestion to "aim high." Nobody ever reaches his standard ; but that is no reason why we should not have a standard. If we did not aim high above the practical coon, we should never even bring *it* down.

I take by the hand the model M.P. I have sketched—the man who has not only a head to think, but a body fit for working out the thought—and I will tell him how to succeed and to satisfy himself in Parliament. The hints apply to him whether he aims at a peerage or at the membership for Finsbury,—the two extremes of political ambition ; whether he thinks he can be a Disraeli, or only a Forbes Mackenzie ;<sup>1</sup> whether Premier or whipper-in ; whether a debater like Osborne,<sup>2</sup> or a steady committee-man like Sir John Buller ;<sup>3</sup> whether he is a man of genius,

<sup>1</sup> Forbes Mackenzie was unseated in 1853 and not again returned to Parliament. He was the author of the Forbes Mackenzie Act for regulating public-houses in Scotland.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Bernal Osborne was the eldest son of Ralph Bernal. He assumed his wife's name of Osborne in 1844. He sat for various constituencies in the course of his career. He was Secretary of the Admiralty from 1853 to 1858. He was defeated at Waterford in 1874, and retired from Parliament. He died in 1882.

<sup>3</sup> Sir John Yarde Buller, afterwards Lord Churston. Disraeli calls him Peel's choice and pattern country gentleman. See *Life of Lord G. Bentinck*, p. 300.

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or only a keen man of the world ; whether he is honest or dishonest,—is bound to a party or pledged to mankind. The House of Commons is only to be approached, wooed, and won, in one way, by all sorts of persons. It is a body without any principles or any prejudices, except against bores. It is utterly indifferent to the creed, and country, and character, of the new man. He who comes to it with a good reputation has no better chance than he who besieges it with a bad one. It rejects all pretensions it has not of itself justified, and all fame it has not itself conferred ; judging most severely and critically those who have attained position independent of it, and of whom it consequently expects and exacts much in justification. It has no principles, because, as a corporation, it has no conscience ; and hence it not only endures, but, if they are presentable and useful, applauds notorious rogues—rogues political and rogues social. It black-balls and sends to Coventry many ; but they are men who have offended on large or small pretext against its own *morale*, which means its own comfort and pleasure. Therefore, he who enters newly the House of Commons may consider that he is taking his first step in his career. To what he may have been, or may have done before, the house is indifferent. He may have been a scamp or a saint—it matters not : the club deals only with sins against itself, and the merit that is useful to it. He may be very rich or very poor—a millionaire or an adventurer—his chances are precisely equal. This is not the common notion, but observation shows that it is the correct one ; and that, indeed, in all its judgments, the House of Commons is governed by the utmost impartiality and republican enlightenment. Intense philosophic selfishness has no small weaknesses or petty prejudices. Composed, as the lower House is, largely of an aristocratic element, there is nothing of the “snob”

about it in the aggregate. Mr Anstey<sup>1</sup> goes about saying, "I was counted out because I was poor;" but Mr Disraeli was always poorer than Mr Anstey, and has been, *de facto*, Premier of England. London society suffered Mr Hudson;<sup>2</sup> but the House of Commons, from the first, laughed at him, and at last howled him down. The House of Commons would not listen to Mr Stanley (the present Lord) when, with all the prestige of his name and lineage, he attempted to teach it about sugar<sup>3</sup>; but the House of Commons cheered the first great sugar speech of Mr Economist Wilson,<sup>4</sup> although Mr Wilson was fresh from a hatter's shop and smelt of "the Borough." The House of Commons hates Manchester; but it jeered Baillie Cochrane's<sup>5</sup> aristocratic attacks on Cottonopolis to that extent that Baillie Cochrane gave up being Pitt, and took to idiotic novels, while it burst into an honest and hearty sympathetic shout when Mr Brotherton,<sup>6</sup> pleading for the Ten Hours Act, said, with the tears in his eyes, "Sir, I am now a Member of Parliament, but I was once a poor, wretched, half-starved factory boy." Again: the House of Commons detested

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Chisholm Anstey. He had retired from Parliament at the general election in 1852. He was appointed Attorney-General at Hong-Kong in 1854, but was suspended in 1858. He afterwards practised at the Bombay bar with great success, and after coming to England for a time returned to his practice at Bombay. He died in 1873.

<sup>2</sup> George Hudson, "the Railway King." He was defeated at the general election in 1859 and died in 1871.

<sup>3</sup> This is not accurate. See Greville's *Memoirs*, vol. vi. p. 345. Stanley afterwards left the Conservative party. He served under Gladstone as Colonial Secretary from 1882 to 1885. He died in 1893.

<sup>4</sup> James Wilson, the founder of *The Economist*, had been a hat manufacturer. He became Financial Secretary of the Treasury in the Aberdeen Ministry. He was appointed Financial Member of the Council of India in 1859, and died in that country in the following year.

<sup>5</sup> Baillie Cochrane was a member of the Young England party. He is said to have been the original of Buckhurst in *Coningsby*. He had lost his seat in 1852. He was created Lord Lamington in 1880, and died in 1890.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Brotherton was celebrated for moving the adjournment of the House at midnight. He was member for Salford from 1832 until his death in 1857.



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Feergus O'Connor;<sup>1</sup> but not because he was a Chartist. Indeed, from what I know of it, the House would rather like, and would, I believe, carefully listen to, a genuine working-man Chartist.

It is odd; but the clever men always blunder, at first, with the House of Commons. The men of genius always attempt, as green genius attempts in other directions, to take it by storm. Disraeli<sup>2</sup> went at the Senate with a rush, to talk Alroyisms; and the yelling laughter which greeted him made him a great man—it gave him so much to obliterate! That was a spasmodic saying—"The time will come when you shall hear me;" but to redeem the boast a system was necessary, and Disraeli, a man essentially of an Italian and intriguing genius, soon found that the House was not to be bullied out of applause. There were no more *tours de force* in his career; he has got on by sheer hard work, on an exact system, biding his time, ever at hand, and never missing an opportunity. He has never been guilty of an impulse since impulse plunged him into the greatest parliamentary failure on record; and that his system is worth studying is suggested by the fact that it has been successful—successful despite drawbacks—to say nothing of his race and creed—which would have crushed most other men. He knew what he had to overcome, and calculated the cost; invested, waited, and got the profits. And the parliamentary system essential to triumph is so invariable, that Mr Disraeli, because he does what Sir Robert Peel did, is accused of being an imitator of Sir Robert Peel. The imitation is said to consist in the assiduous complimenting of everybody. That was poor Sir Robert's forte; a trick coming natural to him as a parvenu,

<sup>1</sup> Feergus O'Connor, the well-known Chartist leader. It has been stated that he inherited tendencies to insanity. He was found to be insane, and placed in confinement in 1852, and died in 1855.

<sup>2</sup> In his first speech in 1837.

and as never certain of what party he would be among in a month. As a parvenu, too, Mr Disraeli finds it indispensable; despises the meanness of sycophancy, but is constrained to resort to it because he knows its results are desirable. Men, secure and safe in their own positions—either Lords J. Russell or Derby—may indulge haughtiness, and be reserved in laudations; but Mr Disraeli bows to the statue of Jehovah, while worshipping Jove, because he does not know if *his* turn won't come again.

Another instance of a man of genius endeavouring to take the House of Commons by assault, and being conspicuously rebuffed, is supplied by Sir Edward Lytton,<sup>1</sup> of whom it now remains to be seen whether he appreciates the sagacity of undermining. Sir Edward entered Parliament, for the express purpose of making a sensation, and of making use of the House of Commons platform for his own intellectual glorification. The intention, always quickly detected, implies a conceited contempt for the House itself, and is always punished by vigorous snubbing. Sir Edward soared wonderfully, but he couldn't get the House to look up. He made undoubtedly fine, rattling, sound, witty speeches; and there was no doubt whatever that he was an acquisition, a suitable representative man, and a possible popular minister. But the pretence offended—the incessant evident desire to render the House subordinate to Sir Edward Bulwer—the prominence given to the individuality which would not identify itself with the whole body—disgusted; and Sir Edward never became a great “parliament man.” He would not work; that is, he scorned the rehearsals; he was always on the stage, stagy, and always insisting on being brilliant. He was, in short, an outsider

<sup>1</sup> Sir E. B. Lytton, the famous novelist. He had sat in Parliament as a Liberal from 1831 to 1841. In 1852 he was returned for Hertfordshire as a Conservative. He was created a peer in 1866, and died in 1873. Though more successful during his second parliamentary career than during his first, he never attained a leading position.

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in the club; he wouldn't join the rest, think, or affect to think, like the rest; and—he talked to the “gallery,” not to the “honourable gentlemen opposite,” and grievously offended the House by indicating indirectly that he thought less of them than of “the great public.” Sir Edward's parliamentary failure is often stupidly adduced as a proof of literary men being unfit for the House of Commons. The theory arises in forgetfulness of the fact that most of the literary men who go into the House of Commons do not go there to become House of Commons personages. What they do not aim at, they do not attain; and, of course, episodal appearances in debate, straggling speeches and lounges about committee-rooms, do not produce that effect which induces competitors to make way for them. The Penates of St Stephen's are jealous gods, and require an exclusive devotion. A great author who won't work for House of Commons position and fame is no more entitled to be a leader there than a great lawyer who doesn't give up the law can expect to head lobbies. The House of Commons heroes, the Pitts, Grahams, Peels, Russells, are the men who live for the House of Commons, and are ambitious of its honours only. Even Disraeli wrote *Coningsby* in a recess: and since he saw power looming in the future, he has not written at all, except with an aim at House of Commons ends, as in the *Political Life* of Bentinck, which was an appeal to a party.

The House of Commons insists upon its own style; and will not “hear, hear” the literary style and got-up brilliancies of the literary member; and it will not entrust a literary man with any sort of leadership, because it distrusts all but those who look at the public and at the Government from its own point of view, and in whose chieftainship, therefore, for its own purposes, it can confide. It, therefore, puts down a Bulwer just as it puts down a Bright (as a man of commerce, and member for



Manchester) or a Kelly<sup>1</sup> (as a lawyer), as a man not identifying himself with it; as a man who moves out of the Commons circle, and has other business, which is not Commons business. These aggregate instincts do not correspond with the individual influences, since most members are sometimes, in some occupation, portions of the public; but they are unmistakable in their operation; and this need not be wondered at, since all large bodies are possessed of a collective tone, so to speak, on all matters applying to their collective interest. But though the House won't place the literary members in the first rank, it is an error to suppose they are such failures as to be disliked. If they are pretentious, mere literary men, they are snubbed; but for the pretentiousness, not for the literature. If they, in their degree and at their leisure, appear in a parliamentary *mêlée* and make a good speech, adopting as nearly as they can the cue of the place, they are listened to deferentially, and applauded. Mr Macaulay was surely no failure! Even Peel did not draw such audiences. When it was known Macaulay would speak, and it always was known, clubs would empty and drawing-rooms would be left to the ladies; and at eleven o'clock—for Macaulay would never deign to speak until the audience was a large one—there would be no seat vacant. He was watched, listened to, and cheered by a rapt audience, who were enjoying, with cultivated taste, a finished essay. Its polish, its completeness, and its exhaustion of the topic in hand, excited universal admiration. But then the House saw more than a mere literary man: they saw an accomplished scholar, a man of learning, of judgment, a man who served a direct and useful purpose in pouring out his mind. They saw a man whose intellectual qualities were

<sup>1</sup> Sir Fitzroy Kelly was Solicitor-General and afterwards Attorney-General under Lord Derby. He was made Chief Baron of the Exchequer in 1866, and died in 1880 at the age of eighty-four.

greater than those of their own Sir Robert Peel, for Sir Robert Peel could not have spoken such an essay. But which would they follow in a political crisis? Sir Robert; because they did not want in their leader a brilliant man only; because Sir Robert had passed his life in studying the relations between them and the world; because Sir Robert was a man of the world, understanding them, men of the world; and because, having studied the trade of governing, and studied nothing else, they could have confidence in his advice in a political emergency. Instinct—the intellect of masses—dictates their choice; and while they admire a Macaulay, they follow Peel. Had Mr Macaulay given up to the House what was meant for the House's constituents, he would have been a Peel too; and, who can tell—perhaps *vice versa*?

“Literary men,” in short, must cease to be literary men (it is a wonder men of literature do not put down the horrible phrase) before they can lead political parties. In other words, they must become ordinary men of the world—worldly—or, in other words, must learn how to manage ordinary men, which is not learned in closets. Burke carried all before him while he remained a politician; but he got sublimated into the philosopher, and degenerated into a “dinner bell.” Sheridan observed this, and gained by the fact. Kelly, in his memoirs, relates that he one day told Sheridan that he (Sheridan) daren't write another comedy, because he was afraid of the author of *The School for Scandal*. But, clearly, Sheridan, who was ambitious of political distinction and whose managership was regarded as an amusement, avoided writing simply to talk with more effect. Gibbon, in his remarks about Sheridan's Warren Hastings' oration, confesses that the powers then developed would require a life of practice; and Gibbon, when an M.P., was a back bencher, from his consciousness that his great intellect was in a world where it was but

as a child's. Sir James Mackintosh is always referred to as among the authors who failed in Parliament, and it is supposed he failed because he was not a leader. As a man of the world, as a politician, he was without influence in the House; but he was admired and cheered as a wise, thoughtful, honest man. The same is to be said of Jeffrey,<sup>1</sup> who had no business (though a good deal of practice) at the Bar, much less in the House of Commons. As I said in the last paper, the great "public man" must have defects of character to suit him to his position. What could the Whigs do with Burke when they found he was a man who would talk "eternal justice" about Marie Antoinette, forgetful of the use the Revolution was to the party? What could Brougham do with Sir James Mackintosh, whose every oration commenced with an apology for his "hot youth's" (and he a Scotchman!) "Vindiciæ"? The "literary man" talks abstractions, and is therefore dangerous. Thus the House of Commons condemned Peel for making George Smythe<sup>2</sup> an Under Foreign Secretary, because the House has a nervous horror, whatever its admiration, of a young man who used to rise in a foreign debate, stand bolt upright, shut his eyes, and pour forth epigrammatic eloquence, sounding like a translation from the French of Vergniaud. The "practical" commonplace man for the House, which thinks well of Forbes Mackenzie for helping Lord Derby on with his coat, and cheered Lord Henry Lennox for bringing in a glass of water—a son of a duke, too!—to Mr Disraeli, while that exhausted statesman was dealing with Direct Taxation in his late immortal demonstration of the lunacy of Protection.

<sup>1</sup> Francis Jeffrey, the famous editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. He was made a Scotch judge, and died in 1850.

<sup>2</sup> George Smythe, the original of Coningsby, a member of the Young England party. He fought the last duel in England. He was defeated at Canterbury in 1852, and never again sat in the House of Commons. He became Viscount Strafford in 1855 and died in 1857. He has been called "a splendid failure."

### III

IF I have induced you to agree with me that those men who go to the House of Commons only with a view to give gratification to their constituents are almost certain to be dead failures, I may rely upon your approval of the rules I would lay down for parliamentary success. It is certainly awkward that you cannot afford altogether to forget your constituents, inasmuch as you have to keep your eye on your re-election; and, to a certain extent, I am bound to advise you to endeavour to please them. The nature of the compliment must be entirely dependent upon the character of the electoral body of which you are the soul. If you result from a small constituency, you can please them best—whether you come from a Lord Londonderry or a St Albans<sup>1</sup>—by returning or continuing the bribery they commenced: with the individual, by looking after the red ribbons and spare attachéships; with the hundred or two, by activity after the heads of the excise and customs department; and in discharging your obligations in these directions you may console yourself with the reflection that while you are convincing those who bought and those who sold you that you were worth the transaction, you are not necessarily interfering with those pursuits wherein members win the applause of other members. If you are so unhappy as to have been exposed by the votes of a great town to all the anomalies accompanying the presence of a “popular member” in an oligarchical assembly, you will assuredly have a difficult

<sup>1</sup> St Albans was disfranchised.

card to play : and it is in particular for such members that these hints are intended. There are three courses open to you ; and it may be mentioned that Sir Robert Peel first discovered the great three-courses carte of statesmanship when he sat for Oxford, which is even more unmanageable than a Riding. You may take the attitude of Mr Bright sitting for Manchester, stand up for your dignity as the voice of half a million, sneer at the country gentlemen, patronise the Minister, and get detested accordingly. Or you may do as Sir Thomas Birch<sup>1</sup> did, sitting for Liverpool ; never intrude in debate at all, dine with the Whigs, get plenty of patronage, and, after seven years, get summarily kicked out. These are the two extreme courses. But there is the compromise of delicate finesse whereby to satisfy Manchester and yet manage the House ; preserving your principles and gaining a hearing, and, so, really pushing your political objects within reach of the leverage of office. Among the great Radical party it is difficult to mention one man who fully illustrates the wisdom of the latter course ; but certainly, Mr Bernal Osborne, whose Radicalism is as little open to doubt as that of Sir Joshua Walmsley,<sup>2</sup> sets a tolerably good example of what a Tribune should be in the Capitol. A Tribune, however, who has been in the Lancers, and who got the tone of "society" in other places than the Reform Club smoking-room, does not come to hand to lead the people every day ; and admirable as it is to see the light-dragon member for Middlesex prancing into a debate in search of liberal forage, it will occur to Mr Wm. Williams<sup>3</sup> that much

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Birch lost his seat in 1852.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Joshua Walmsley, a member of the Anti-Corn Law League. In 1847 he was returned for Lancaster but afterwards unseated. He was returned in turn for Bolton in 1849 and for Leicester in 1852. He was defeated in 1857, did not again sit in Parliament, and died in 1871. He was the founder of the National Reform Association.

<sup>3</sup> Radical member for Lambeth.



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of Mr Osborne's success is attributable to his having studied the first gentlemen in the world in their ladies' drawing-rooms—in a word, to his understanding the nature of his opponents. Yet, as the Cobdens seek the House of Commons and the encounter, they ought to try to comprehend the enemy, too—by opportunities at Bellamy's and in Westbourne Terrace, if "*nous autres*" "stem the tide of democracy" with street doors and domestic Lord Charles Russells<sup>1</sup> in Belgravia.

What is true of one man among them is true of the whole Radical party—the Liberal Irish members included. Miss Martineau, in her history,<sup>2</sup> says that the glory of the Radicals has been their individuality. But take the fates of the men and their principles, and this individuality will be found to have been their curse. The Radicals have been a number of men—they have never been a parliamentary party; and while this has not advanced their cause, it has not even advanced themselves. As it is in our own day, so has it been since 1835—since the aristocracy first recovered the shock of the Reform Bill and discovered that they were quite safe. We know what the Radical (in Parliament) party, sometimes so called, now is, what it can do, and what it has recently done. We know, undoubtedly, that it talks very nearly the thoughts of the masses; but we know, assuredly, that its legislative results, direct or indirect, are very limited. Why?—This Radical party—this number of men who would vote votes such as Whigs and Tories could not give—has never been less than one hundred strong—or, with the Liberal Irish (national) members, a fourth of the working House of Commons. Its worth and its position are utterly disproportionate to its capacity for affecting division. The cause lies in the fact that the big towns select a superior class of intellectual

<sup>1</sup> Lord Charles Russell was Sergeant-at-Arms.

<sup>2</sup> The *History of the Thirty Years' Peace*.

men, or positive, dogmatic men, for their representatives: that, consequently, there is *no* rank and file—that is, no inevitable party organisation. The Tories and Whigs—aristocracies and the nominees of aristocracies—are, as parties, composed necessarily of a mass of mediocrities, and the crowd comes naturally under the protection of two or three “leaders,” conspicuous among the many for reliability and parliamentary aptitude. But the Radicals are all clever or crotchety—and they are, therefore, an army of captains—a squadron of field-m Marshals—a “clump of spears” (each spear wielded by an independent knight)—which, when the battle begins, is certain to radiate into adventurous isolations. Well, what is the avail of a battalion of Brights—a corps of Cobdens—riding separately at the closed squares of the compact oligarchies, who, though they make the mistake which the Marquis of Rockingham pointed out, of fighting one another for a monopoly of that which would suffice for them both, if they had but the sense to unite, have always the discretion to close together when a riskful Radical foray is really meant? The individual distinction is apparently great. A Sir William Molesworth<sup>1</sup> reads his speeches and unfurls his cambrics with great *éclat*; and archæological members speculate, as he talks Benthamism in italics, whether it isn't a pity Manchester has displaced philosophical Radicalism. The strangers' gallery, when Mr Roebuck<sup>2</sup> sits down, says “Gad, he *did* give it 'em, didn't he?” Manchester, when crushed into the Free Trade Hall, is convinced that Mr Bright carries all before him at

<sup>1</sup> Sir W. Molesworth, M.P. for Southwark, which he continued to represent until his death in 1855. A philosophical Radical. He edited *Hobbes' Works*. See Cobden's reference to him in *Morley's Life of Cobden*, vol. ii. p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Roebuck, M.P. for Sheffield. He was defeated in 1868, but again returned in 1874, and continued to sit for that borough until his death in 1879. His course was illiberal in his later years.



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Westminster, and sees in neat Mr Milner Gibson<sup>1</sup> the personification of a hero of debate. The smoking-room receives Bernal Osborne after a speech with a shout, and declares that that last "mot" will live for ever. Bristol Berkeley<sup>2</sup> does Thersites to the admiration of a placid ten o'clock House; and even the Marquis of Blandford<sup>3</sup> might long to have seen such an orator over nuts with Windham,<sup>4</sup> or looser model Whig of the revolutionary epoch. When Sir Joshua Walmsley delivers his elaborate and gentlemanly protest against the British Constitution, there is not one who does not admire the sad earnestness of the man; and Squires like Tyrrell<sup>5</sup> would confess that this was an improvement upon the vehemencies of Orator Hunt.<sup>6</sup> But, in the long run, *cui bono*? Each knight has his own banner, and cries his own cry; and the party is sneered at, and the principle does not get on, for the fire is insufficient for all the irons thrust in. Party completeness is sacrificed to personal glory, and the result is that the Radicals have not carried a single point (for Free-trade was not a Radical test) in their whole history. Owing their advent to Parliament to the Whigs, the Radicals have lived in the traditional supposition that, crowded as their ranks always have been with abilities, and really heading a popular movement, their only function was to oppose. Radicals opposing and Whigs proposing; and so leaving to the Russells and Greys the merit and the honour of whatever instalment of advance was accomplished. Take for

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Milner Gibson, the eminent Free Trader, M.P. for Manchester. He was defeated in 1857. He was afterwards returned for Ashton, but being defeated in 1868, retired from public life and died in 1884. He strongly advocated the repeal of the "taxes on knowledge."

<sup>2</sup> Henry Berkeley, M.P. for Bristol until his death in 1870, having been first returned in 1837. He was the champion of the ballot.

<sup>3</sup> He became Duke of Marlborough in 1857, and died in 1883. He was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1876 to 1880.

<sup>4</sup> William Windham, who died in 1810.

<sup>5</sup> Sir John Tyrrell, M.P. for North Essex.

<sup>6</sup> See Sir Spencer Walpole's *History of England*, vol. i. p. 349.

instance the records of the "Reform" attempts from the date of the "Charter" to the last "Hume's motion," and candour must admit that, whatever the faults of the people, the sorrows of the suffrage question are mainly attributable to the bad "leading" in Parliament. Mr Cobden, in his late letter to Sharman Crawford,<sup>1</sup> suggests an organisation and a party to get the ballot. Will Mr Cobden begin the sacrifices necessary to such an organisation, and forgo idiosyncrasies — say for five years? Supposing the Radicals agreed together to attend to but this one question for the whole of next Session? Probably they would drive Lord Derby from power, and the Whigs into conviction, in three months; and in three years after they had got the ballot, they would have attained most other things they now vaguely aim at.

The moral of this argument about the Radicals is, that no member can be a parliamentary personage unless he combine with his individual impressiveness the prestige of distinct party power and position. By and by, when the House of Commons consists of men all equally amenable to the rigid public judgment of extensive constituencies—that is to say, when votes begin to be given, not for classes, but for the nation—the consideration of the tactique essential to the senate may be of a very different character. But in these days it is the ambition of utter ignorance to desire an "independent" seat in the House of Commons; and when the leading journal was telling Mr Cardwell<sup>2</sup> and Sir James Graham, the other day, that they ought to soar above sectional politics, and aim at the lofty functions of parliamentary arbitrament between contending factions,

<sup>1</sup> Sharman Crawford, a well-known advocate of Tenant Right. He retired from Parliament in 1852.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Cardwell, M.P. for Oxford, afterwards Lord Cardwell. In a subsequent election contest at Oxford he defeated Thackeray. He was responsible for the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854. Under Gladstone in 1868, he re-organised the army. He died in 1886.

the leading journal was advising precisely that course which has made the Radicals impotent, and which, adopted since the break-up of 1846, by the Peelites (Wilkeites *sans* the two young Wilkes),<sup>1</sup> has relieved Mr Disraeli, for the present, from all envious apprehensions of Mr Gladstone. The hon. gentleman who rises to tell what he individually thinks of a submitted motion is talking mere abstractions. If he be a Mr Bright, speaking for vast middle-class Manchester, he speaks with a certain effect; but what those thousands may do if their will is not obeyed, is a vague, distant apprehension that does not tell; and meanwhile Manchester is only one man. What the House of Commons needs is not to be told by wise men what is best, or by democratic men what is just; but what, the balance of parties being so and so, can be done, acted upon, resolved by the impending division. Lord John Russell is (I fear we may begin to say was) listened to, not for his individual opinion, but because the House knows he is a man who has calculated what is possible and practicable under certain circumstances—because it knows there are a hundred or two at his back whom he may not have verbally consulted, but whose prejudices and passions he has accurately estimated, and who are, therefore, certain to follow him into the lobby.

Nobody supposes, when Mr Disraeli suggests an argument, that he is hinting at his own convictions. His merit as a House of Commons leader is, that he abnegates all convictions of his own; his genius as a tactician consists in compromising with the convictions of others. Lord John Russell would be of no account as an individual if he wrote to the electors of the city of London, that henceforth he would be "independent," and talk what he

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir Robert Peel, who died in 1895; and Sir Frederick Peel, who, after filling various minor ministerial offices, was appointed a railway commissioner in 1873. He died in June 1906.

believed. Mr Disraeli would disappear as a politician if he ceased to be the manager of a party. The weight of Sir James Graham in a debate arises, not from the general belief that Sir James Graham is at all as clever a man as the newspaper writer the morning before on the same topic, but from a knowledge that circumstances may arise to hand power to Sir James, and that he, anticipating and providing for this, is not speaking lax truisms, but sentences to be practically applied hereafter to the official working of the empire. Here is all the difference between the position of statesmen like Sir James and moralists—say, as Mr Cobden. Mr Cobden talks out his beliefs in the sharp, clear, crisp sentences that delight a public meeting; and in talking these he trusts to accident for a following—for the response, which response he does not expect in the House itself. Very likely the House feels that the response will be heard some years hence; but the House has as little to do with the men before the age as with the men behind the age. The House, as I said in a former paper, admires intensely Mr Macaulay delivering an essay; but they admire more, because it is “business,” even a Mr Walpole<sup>1</sup> delivering a *plan*. There is only one instance in late history of a statesman standing alone in the House of Commons, and that is in the case of Sir Robert Peel, who did not leave, but was left by, his party; and even his vast individuality and personal potency did not enable him to sustain his prestige and his prominence. With the minor gods, individuality is idiocy—Sibthorpism. A mediocrity not speaking by party lights is an insufferable spectacle; and unhappily it is a spectacle distinctive of Radicalism, all the Radicals who are not clever being crotchety. Our Ewarts<sup>2</sup> and Aglionbys<sup>3</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Spencer Walpole, Home Secretary in the Derby Ministry.

<sup>2</sup> Wm. Ewart, M.P. for Dumfries, the author of many useful changes and reforms.

<sup>3</sup> H. A. Aglionby, M.P. for Cockermouth.

Ansteys insist upon their separate commands—and there is the catastrophe of a count-out. The British empire has no time to give itself up to Aglionbys and Ansteys. The sheerest vanity alone explains this non-subsidence into a practical party. Certainly there are motions which must be brought forward, though they may not be carried; but the selection should depend on the decision of a party “caucus.” An honest Radical member would consider first how the wishes of his constituents could be practically forwarded; and his own distinction would be conditional upon the success of the whole party. Sheffield can have no pride in seeing Mr Roebuck abhorred; but it could have no objection to being successful in its politics. And even Mr Roebuck has of late confined his energies to criticism—he never proposes. He has given up his old Radical rule, derived from Diogenes—of praying to statues in order to accustom himself to be refused!

Gentlemen, newly elected by trusting hundreds, and rehearsing in your studies the great orations with which you will astound the senate, take these hints to heart; select your leader, appoint your whipper-in, and then cultivate taciturnity; and cease to have a will. Believe me, that you will not be less than you expected; and your cause will become much greater. You would not go into court, because you know a certain proverb, to plead your own suit; and you ought not to go into the House of Commons to do that for your exclusive self, which a Disraeli, or a Russell, or an Osborne, or a Bright, or (if you are an Irishman) a Keogh,<sup>1</sup> or Duffy<sup>2</sup> (all men

<sup>1</sup> William Keogh, M.P. for Athlone. He was Solicitor-General for Ireland in the Aberdeen Ministry. The extreme wing of the Irish party attacked him, considering his acceptance of office was inconsistent with his former speeches. He was made an Irish judge in 1856.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, a member of the Young Ireland party. He had been Editor of the *Nation*. After the failure of the insurrection he was twice put on his trial but the jury would not convict. He afterwards emigrated to Victoria. He became Prime Minister of the colony, and was knighted. He returned to Europe in 1880, and died in 1903.



built for leadership), may be found, upon conditions, to say with effect for you. If you are clever, your cleverness will tell twice as well if you speak as one of many, for then your cleverness is not an abstraction, but a power; and if you are only a plain, passable, week-day man, you will, if you are a partisan, find yourself respected, whereas, if you are so impertinent as to come forward as an individuality, you will be despised, and, if it's late, hooted into an ignominy your wife will never forget, if you do. Let the new Radicals, then (as other politics take care of themselves), ascertain, before November, if Radicalism be incapable of an organisation. Some of the new men are, it is said, investigating this curious philosophical point; and a correspondence is reputed to be going on between advanced Englishmen and progressing Irishmen, which may lead to the creation of a powerful body in Parliament pledged to do popular work. The Manchester banquet, announced for the penultimate week in October, may mean a conference. The hero of the feast will be he who has most crotchets to give up, and let us anticipate a strife in denudition between Mr Hume and Mr Cobden! The apple to him who is least laden.

#### IV

I HAVE by this time assumed that you agree with me in the several propositions I have brought forward: first, that only those who are "men of the world," and have an enduring physique, should go into the House of Commons; secondly, that all men, qualified by body, brains, and worldly tact, have an equal chance of success in the House, if they will study and conciliate the requirements of a busy assembly, bent, not upon theorising, oratising, or showing off, but simply and solely on practical government; and, thirdly, that only those are wanted in the House who are content, for the sake of the direct advancement of their opinions, to merge their individuality into the organisation of "a party." It has taken three epistles to you to make these three points palpable and plain; and whatever doubts you may have originally had, are now, I would hope, removed by a careful consideration of the personal illustrations with which I have furnished you. I am not talking abstract maxims, I am only giving you a list of the men who succeed—men whom you know and can study, at your leisure, and whom reflection will induce you to imitate.

Look at the House of Commons from the right point of view—as a club, composed, principally, of members of the governing classes, tolerably honest, but intensely prejudiced, and managing to combine what they regard as public good, with an immense amount of private-family-class-profit. The relations of the majority of the House to their constituents are not rigorous: they depend for their private comfort, personal position, and party pros-



perity, but slightly upon the opinions of the voters who voted for them; and their constituents being, again, but a section of the vast public, the "member" who is ranked among the Whigs or the Tories never thinks and never acts with the sense of national responsibility—with a deference to national will. He got into Parliament to rise or fall with the "party"; and he has, consequently, a lax morale about public affairs. His own existence in Parliament is a job—a sham; and English public life—a series of jobs and shams—does not startle him; and his conscience is comforted with the reflection that, somehow or another, the country takes care of itself in spite of the inadequacy and dishonour of the Government. He finds the political differences between himself and "the honourable gentleman opposite" exceedingly slight, while he is sure the said honourable gentleman is, privately, and apart from his politics, and endurance, nay, applause, of all the shams and jobs, a high-spirited, high-minded, good-tempered English gentleman. There is, then, no sharp political animosity between "Conservative" and "Liberal Conservative," and there is consequently no exalted tone in public life. The Whigs and the Tories are on the same committees together; they dine together; they even may belong to the same club. They meet at common houses; their families become interlaced; and when these are the conditions of political opposition, there is too much social friendliness about it to allow it to be very honest or very national. Whigs and Tories, as a mass, proceed from the same class; and, except on technicalities, they really think alike. They together constitute an oligarchy—a special caste which possesses the official government of England; and, in reality, they are unitedly fighting together against that national dictation which they read in newspapers and hear from Radicals, which they defer to after long

resistance, but which "being unorganised," and visible only in "vile rabble," at election times, they unaffectedly despise. It is all very wrong and very melancholy ; but so long as these things are, let those who seek Parliament remember that they are enrolling themselves, not in a popular assembly whose heart beats with the pulse of the nation, but in a close club, perfect in itself, largely independent of out-of-doors verdicts or individuals, and therefore deciding absolutely the fates of its own members. If you want to revolutionise the House, work away from without ; but, being a member, make a proper estimate of its composition and constitution, identify yourself with it, labour with it and for it, and, in a word, manage it. Think first of your party ; but, secondly, always of the House ; and when it is thus seen that you are not there to aid your individuality, you will cease at once to be regarded as a *novus homo*, whom it would be dangerous to trust and absurd to listen to. The House of Commons Club looks, in fact, with suspicion at every new member who is not one of the oligarchy—as an intruder—a possibly hazardous man, who may work like Hume or talk like Roebuck ; and it is this suspicion which every new man, not a silent member by right of birth or position, has in the first place to overcome. As I have said in a former paper, the representative of a large constituency, looking to his re-election, cannot satisfy their ignorant expectations, without appearing frequently in debate, to reiterate his stale opinions ; and, as I have also hinted before, this might be done without long speeches, without insulting the club, and without endangering personal position. But it is a great out-of-doors error to suppose that the club itself regulates its approval in proportion to display. It is not so in the world, and it is not so in the House ; and, indeed, in the House, the taciturn, careless, back bencher, who never

appears on the stage, is often the teacher in rehearsal—the prompter—felt, not seen—when the curtain is up. For instance, Mr Cornewall Lewis<sup>1</sup> had more to do with the government of England, in Lord John Russell's time, than Sir George Grey;<sup>2</sup> and it is said Mr Henry Baillie<sup>3</sup> and Lord Lonsdale<sup>4</sup>—two silent men—now affect Lord Derby and Mr Disraeli more than the rest of the Tory cabinet put together. Fox had a foolometer, upon whom he tried his measures, just as Molière experimented with his plays upon his cook; and in that sense, in a club, such as the House of Commons, the “public” may be in reality more truly represented by a Colonel Sibthorp than by a Colonel Mure.<sup>5</sup> The leader of the House is seldom the most intellectual man in the House—the leader of the party is not at all necessarily the greatest thinker, best talker, or profoundest writer, in its ranks; and, among the file, rank is accorded not at all in reference to what “literary men” call intellect, and not at all in reference to acquired general knowledge. Again, to use illustrations, Mr Talfourd<sup>6</sup> was less a power than Mr William Williams; Lord Mahon<sup>7</sup> than Mr Christopher.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George Cornewall Lewis, the eminent writer. He had been Under Secretary for the Home Department under Lord John Russell, Sir George Grey being his chief. He lost his seat in 1852, but re-entered the House in 1855. He afterwards filled various offices and died in 1863.

<sup>2</sup> Sir George Grey had lost his seat in 1852, but was returned for Morpeth in 1853, and retired in 1874. He was Home Secretary, with slight intervals, for nearly twenty years. He was, it is said, content to be an administrator without aspiring to be a statesman.

<sup>3</sup> M.P. for Inverness-shire. See Greville's *Memoirs*, vol. vi. p. 276. He held office under Lord Derby.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Lonsdale, President of the Council in 1852. It is said that extra Parliamentary meetings of the Tories were frequently held at his house. He was the Lord Eskdale of *Coningsby*.

<sup>5</sup> Colonel Mure, the eminent classical scholar, M.P. for Renfrewshire from 1846 to 1855. He seldom spoke in the House.

<sup>6</sup> Sergeant Talfourd, afterwards judge. The author of *Ion* and other plays.

<sup>7</sup> Lord Mahon, afterwards Earl Stanhope, the well-known historian.

<sup>8</sup> R. A. Christopher, M.P. for North Lincolnshire, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster under Lord Derby.

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In the world we laugh and sneer at those who don't "get on," much as they may be our betters in all except "getting on"; and why not in the St Stephen's Club?

I have used the word "rehearsal" several times:—let me explain my meaning. I have suggested what is the real constitution of the House of Commons; and it suggests itself that every member of that House is perfectly aware of the precise facts. I think they *are* "the first assembly of gentlemen" in Europe—patricians, no doubt, but patriots, too, whose blood leaps through their limbs when there is occasion, as though they never had trafficked away small national perquisites—and who will (about midnight) cheer madly noble sentiments. But, whether or not first gentlemen in Europe, this is certain: that they are a cleverer, shrewder, more dexterous set of men than you will find elsewhere in England—House of Commons existence being in itself the most magnificent of educations, in teaching the relative importance of men and things; and the reason why the ordeal of a maiden speech is so greatly dreaded, is simply because you know the sort of men who are your auditors; keener men than are in the whole world beside—accustomed to measure intellect by its exact results on the world, and capable of seeing at a glance through any pretence that may be offered by a virgin orator. The Demosthenes of the public-house may have a profound contempt for the back bencher member of the House of Commons who never talks. But where would the Demosthenes be if the back bencher met him in society—at a railway meeting—at quarter sessions—at the bar—in the sweating parlour of a banking-house? These clever gentlemen, who are only chorus when the curtain is up—when the Speaker is in the chair—the "Strangers" plentiful—the Reporters arrayed—the ladies aghast—are as potent as Disraeli, and as powerful as Sir James, when they come across one another at dinner-

parties, in the smoking-room, at committees or country-house gatherings. For their own reasons they are insignificant on the stage, where they submit to the necessities of discipline. But who would recognise Mr Glyn,<sup>1</sup> of the House, in the Mr Glyn who sits chairman twice a year over a noisy meeting in a Roman Doric room ten times as handsome as "the House," and who manages to a marvel the finance of the "North-Western"? Who would suppose that the Mr William Brown,<sup>2</sup> who never speaks in the House, is the same Mr William Brown who, at Liverpool, regulates hundreds of vessels, thousands of employés, and millions of merchandise? Who would suppose that that quiet Mr Walter,<sup>3</sup> universal in his knowledge, and because so wise, so very temperate, "leads" the "leading journal"? This club is by no means to be estimated by reference to its own chiefs: a Russell or a Disraeli is selected and put first; not because they are the first men in all respects, but because they have, with most time, the most serviceable special capacity as mouthpieces of large bodies. The House, then, being a crowd of the cleverest, keenest fellows going, position in it is not dependent solely upon public appearance, but upon the impression produced off the stage, in private society, in the smoking-room, in committee. M.P.'s are gossips: they know everything of each other; they canvass one another; they estimate one another; and, if the hon. gentleman who has talked very loud, and perhaps very well, on the stage, has not also been a hit in the green-room, his success is very incomplete and partial; and the applause of his local journal will but slightly compensate for the sneer he will detect in the lobby. There are some men in the House who may count friends

<sup>1</sup> George Carr Glyn, M.P. for Kendal.

<sup>2</sup> William Brown, M.P. for South Lancashire from 1846 to 1859. He was made a baronet in 1863.

<sup>3</sup> John Walter, M.P. for Nottingham from 1847 to 1859. He was afterwards returned for Berkshire. He died in 1894.



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in the whole 656 of their colleagues—Lord John, for one; Mr Labouchere<sup>1</sup> for another; and there is no accident in such instances—it is the result of a deliberate persevering system of gaining good opinions. There are certain men with whom reserve tells better than cordiality—as with Sir Robert Peel; but lesser men will lose everything if they neglect the art of producing favourable impressions. Fenelon, in his account of Cicero, says, “when he began to dedicate himself more earnestly to public business, he thought that while mechanics knew the name, the place, the use of every tool and instrument they take in their hands, though these things are inanimate, it would be absurd for a statesman whose functions cannot be performed but by means of men, to be negligent in acquainting himself with the citizens. He therefore made it his business to commit to memory not only their names, but the place of abode of those of greater note, what friends they made use of, and what neighbours were in their circle.” Certainly the “great favourite” class of men in society owe something to a natural amiability, but at least the unsympathetic men might learn the alphabet, the letters, of the language they have to read; might master the House in detail as well as collectively. No orator succeeds who does not know his audience: and the House of Commons is cruel to those whom it does not like. Its likes and dislikes have little to do with the politics of the object. Mr Hume, the most plain-speaking of Radicals, has been for twenty years the most popular man in an oligarchical House of Commons, and not because, but in spite, of his public appearances, which have been, first, “unbusiness-like,” as having no party at his back, and further, have been slightly too numerous, although, as

<sup>1</sup> Henry Labouchere, M.P. for Taunton for nearly thirty years. He was created Lord Taunton in 1859, and died in 1869.

Charles Buller<sup>1</sup> said, "there is never any monotony about him." Mr Henry Drummond<sup>2</sup> never rises but to sneer at all public virtue and all political pretence; but he is attentively listened to and laughed at, not that the wit is so acute, but that so many have met him out at dinner, and enjoyed the sample in the bulk. To point a contrast, it is enough to say that Mr Bright carries his inexorable detestation of Toryism into the lobby: whence he is shunned in the green-room and hooted on the stage. A great blunder, for Radicalism cannot do without Mr Bright.

These suggestions will show to new M.P.'s the wisdom of a long study of the House *out* of the House, before they venture on the pursuit of the Speaker's eye. A stranger, who is not known and ascertained privately, has no chance of being heard: he is only stared at. But also, before rising to speak, the man who means to win should have come to a conclusion as to what modern House of Commons oratory amounts to, should catch the knack of the arena, and talk in the tone of the place.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Buller, a famous Liberal, the chief author of the Durham (Canadian) report. Bulwer Lytton describes him in *St Stephen's* "as a fine humorist, a finer reasoner, as lively as Luttrell and as logical as Mill."

<sup>2</sup> Henry Drummond, M.P. for West Surrey—a Tory of the old school. He was one of the founders of the Irvingite Church. He died in 1860. Kinglake describes him as a man often soaring into mystic, spiritualistic realms, and as gifted with a piercing cleverness, with keen lively wit, and a nature devoid of fear.



## V

I UNDERTOOK in my last letter to furnish you with some useful hints about the House of Commons school of oratory. Let me, as before, teach by reference to examples.

You have been at Lady Dedlock's party, out Chelsea way. You have danced, or played whist, or heard songs, or flirted, or been bored in some other way; and at about eleven you discover that, having undergone sufficient of the horrors of English society, there is to be a division down at "the House," and you impetuously get away, convincing the hon. Misses Dedlock that you are a martyr to your public duty. You leap into your brougham or your hausom, and drive to the Reform or to the Carlton, to ask what is going on down at the bottom of Parliament Street. You meet somebody shirking Mr Hayter<sup>1</sup> or Mr Mackenzie, avoiding the "whip" over a late cutlet or an early cigar; and they tell you that they left at ten, when "that solemn ass" So-and-so was on his legs—"his hind ones, of course"—but that "Dizzy" or Lord John was expected to be "up" every minute. You hasten out of the club back to your cab. "To the House." You whirl along dark Pall Mall, and past deserted Charing Cross, and down empty Whitehall. It is an odd contrast:—the silent streets, and the busy bustling scene, alive with light and life even at midnight, to which you are hurrying, and which you have already pictured on your brain, exciting you as the colours mingle. Mighty London is putting its pulses to rest; but the heart—the Senate—is pumping away the sustaining blood of the nation, in the far corner, on the Thames; and

<sup>1</sup> The Liberal Whip.

you—is it not strange that the policemen do not bend as you rush by?—are going to lend a hand. The Horse Guards strike twelve as you pass—the strokes reverberating through the still air; and it is an effort of the parliamentary imagination to credit that the Imperial Legislature can be at work, and the Imperial People of the capital—having gone to bed—so utterly indifferent to it. But as your vehicle hastens on by the bridge, you meet a couple of cabs galloping eastward; you see that they are carrying the familiar faces of reporters; and you judge by the mad speed they are going at, that there is something “important” in progress. It is a sign of life, and you are now glad you left Lady Dedlock’s in such good time. You turn into Palace Yard, crammed with four-wheelers, and horses, and grooms, and porters; the new House and the old Hall are a blaze of gas; and you are excited, and even begin to wonder how the division will go. You thread the well-lighted but silent hall of Rufus and Hastings, and get into the lobby—empty, but ghastly with excess of glare. Hayter receives you with a wink, or Mackenzie with a grin. You haul down your white vest, and square your tie, and make your curls all taut; lift your hat, slide along the vestibule, and enter the House. As you have gone on, since you alighted from your cab, you have heard, from porter, policemen, messengers, stray members, and the whippers-in, that “Mr Disraeli is up”; and hints have flown about your ears that he is making a “great speech.” As you reach the vestibule, you hear swelling cheers; and your fancy, in spite of your experience, if you have any, will insist that there is a fervent orator within, consuming his hearers with burning eloquence, and wielding fierce M.P.dom with overwhelming power. Your blood tingles through your veins with expectation; and as you push open the green door, your every nerve is throbbing with eagerness.

The House of Commons is before you, and your sensations undergo an instantaneous collapse. Your eye takes in the scene: a full House, listening, but lazily and loungingly; the cheer you heard having been made up of an aggregate half laugh, half sneer. You see the orator, there at the top. His body is half thrown across the table, one hand resting behind him, flirting with a laced cambric, the other white hand tapping gently a red box. And he is making a great speech? He is talking to Lord John, whose arms are crossed carelessly, whose thin lips are parted with an easy smile, and who seems to think the eloquence rather amusing. Mr Disraeli has a most exquisite voice, and he is using only its gentlest modulations. He is quite colloquial, and his tone is friendly and familiar,—especially when he comes to a bitter innuendo, when he turns his head to the country gentlemen, that they may hear it and laugh—a low, simmering chuckle, that just agitates the surface for a moment only, Lord John and the Whigs and the Radicals smiling, too, as though the sarcasm were a good-natured joke. Mr Disraeli is getting near the end of his speech, and is now recapitulating and fastening all the points (not mathematical ones) together, as is his wont; and this is his argumentative style. He approaches the peroration—his forte; and here he raises his head; he throws back his collar; he puts by his cambric; he turns from Lord John and faces the House. He speaks slower; he ceases his affected stammer; he is more serious and more solemn, but still quiet and unpretending. Talking now to the many, and not to one or two, he becomes more oratorical, and he fixes attention. What he is now saying is the manifesto of a party; and not a syllable is lost. He is nearing a meaning, and his articulation is elaborate; and there is a dead silence. But he is still unexcited; dexterously and quietly he eludes the meaning—soars above it, in one or two involuted

closing sentences, delivered with a louder voice and with more vehement gestures; and having got the cheer at the right spot, this great orator, concluding, sinks into his seat, as nonchalant as though he had been answering a question about Fahrenheit, and immediately (Mackenzie having told him how the division will be) turns to ask Lord Henry Lennox whether Grisi was in good voice that night!

This is an average appearance of things on an average great debate night; and this is a daguerreotype of Disraeli on such an occasion—a man proper to be singled out as a specimen of a House of Commons orator, because he is just now the official “leader of the House,” and because the ambition of his life (and what such men aim at they *hit*) has been to succeed in that assembly. The loose attitude of the House answers to the lax, chatty style of the orator. There is no earnestness in the assembly, and there is no violence or vehemence in the speaker addressing it. It is the assembly of “the first gentlemen in Europe”; and the style of the place, you can see, is the easy and the gentlemanly style. Those uncommonly clever fellows do not want an argument or an appeal; each has settled how he will vote; and all they require is a “*précis*” from capable statesmen for and against the vote. Mr Disraeli has commanded them all by being useful; and his oratory consists of lucid statements of practical cases, made agreeable by politeness to all parties, and rendered amusing by happy hits at awkward individuals. The only quality he displays in a speech is clearness of intellect, developed in that which somebody has said is the definition of House of Commons talk—“elegant conversation.” He rarely ventures on a little eloquence: that the House of Commons will not endure; for it does not want to be excited—it wants to be guided; it calculates—it does not feel. Clearly, then, people who want to succeed with the

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Commons must, as near as possible, adopt Mr Disraeli's system.

Take the next great men, Lord Palmerston<sup>1</sup> and Lord John Russell. Fancy a spirited dispatch being calmly read to the Queen, and you gain an exact idea of Lord Palmerston's style of speaking. The thoughts are cheered, for Lord Palmerston is intensely the Englishman, above party, and always talking, or seeming, which is as good, to talk, from the national cue; but the spirited sentences would have no chance but for the calm manner. Again, Lord John Russell is always for preserving his country—in ice. The frigid voice, the didactic tone, the reserved gesture—consisting of catlike and cautiously placing his hand on the table, and slowly withdrawing it—are very repulsive to a stranger, who cannot understand how that cold nature got a leadership. But Lord John Russell is essentially a House of Commons hero: deeply imbued with the tone of the place, bred up in all its knacks and mannerisms, and as an orator, in the House of Commons sense, keeping parties together—he still holds the first place.<sup>2</sup> Lord John Russell is often truly eloquent, delivering fine “passages” when the occasion demands an ascension above the dead routine: but those who have admired such passages must not suppose that the manner corresponded to the vigorous idea. The melancholy of the manner and the sad seriousness of the voice, but deepen as the thought expands; and the heartiest cheering which he has ever enjoyed has not induced him to quicken his speech by one syllable. Enter the House while Lord John is in the midst of a peroration, and you might think that some one was pronouncing a funeral *éloge*, and that all the

<sup>1</sup> Palmerston, formerly Foreign Secretary under Lord John Russell, became Home Secretary under Aberdeen. He afterwards became Prime Minister, and died in 1865.

<sup>2</sup> [The writer had to modify this opinion in observing Lord John in the after session.]



mourners were hooting him. There is the excitement visible in the House itself, but the excitement is not even apparently shared in by the speaker. So that when Mr Patrick Somers,<sup>1</sup> who was a very competent judge, said that the House of Commons was the best night-house in London, he meant only, as in other such places, for the audience, not for the performers.

The use of the term "debate" leads to a common misapprehension. It implies discussion; and, properly speaking, there never is any discussion in the House of Commons. A "debate" is simply a series of speakers speaking for themselves, or for numbers, offering advice to the whole. There are allusions here and there in these speeches to other speeches; but there is little or no replicatory argument. There were debates once when there were giants in the House of Commons; but those were days when there were also dwarfs. Size is assimilated now. There are now no dull, gaitered, bovine country gentlemen; and what nominees for towns are left are active-minded, keen fellows, who are matches for first ministers in mere logic. Between the orator and the audience there is no great difference in intellect; and all the speaking assumes that the audience is too clever to need the elimination of obvious common-places, to endure flatulent eloquence, or to bear with any pretentious tone of superiority.

Take examples of failures, and learn by them. The bores of the House of Commons are as well known as the pets; and it is very remarkable, that the bores are acknowledged to be about the cleverest men going. The bore, *par excellence*, was kicked out at the last election; and it was a pity, for he was to be studied, on the principle which rules the cooking of cucumbers. He was a wonderful man—a man of genuine genius. His memory was wax to receive and marble to retain. His acuteness was miracu-

<sup>1</sup> John Patrick Somers, formerly M.P. for Sligo borough.

*Who was this bore -*



lously rapid. His honesty was beyond all question. He could speak glibly, and for six hours at a time, if need were. This man devoted himself to the House of Commons; sacrificing to it splendid professional prospects; and bold in that sacrifice, in the consciousness of ability, integrity, and noble intentions, he concluded that he was entitled to be a personage. Accordingly, he attacked every subject. He was in every debate, on every committee. He moved for any returns. He introduced any grievance. *Figaro* here, *Figaro* there! He speedily advanced into boredom. Put down, counted out, he retaliated; he lectured the House, he expostulated, he abused, he reviled. No men are ever misunderstood in the House of Commons. They said he was clever; and if they had had time they would have taken a pleasure in his speaking. But they had no time; they did not require instruction or enlightenment from a man who stood aloof from parties, and speaking, therefore, only for himself, spoke for one no other M.P. cared one curse about. He had not patience or tact enough to study the men he wanted to master; and the result was, that, with all his capacity, he was the most signal failure, in proportion to the pretension, ever recorded. He had trusted to good speaking—to the readiness that delighted debating societies; and he found that good speaking was the last article in the list of weapons necessary in a *coup de main* on the House of Commons. In another way, there is a signal illustration to be referred to of the inefficiency of the mere orator to gain a position in such an assembly. Such was the great bore in the Parliament from 1841 to 1846. He was, perhaps, the finest speaker ever heard. As an elocutionist, I never heard his equal; and it was universally admitted that he was an accomplished, clever man. He talked—perhaps delighting in his own voice, and in his smooth, elegant sentences—somewhat too frequently and too long; but all that he

said was to the point, and was well said. Yet, when he spoke, the House emptied itself; and if he talked for three hours, not three lines appeared in the newspapers. Why? I asked a member once; and the answer was, "Because he spoke so well." He was only an elocutionist; he was not of a party, speaking that which would be followed up; and abstract essays were of course despised. This gentleman is now in his proper sphere. As a journalist, he may have financial reasons to know he never is read; but, at least, he has the gratification of seeing 312 columns abstract cleverness put into print during the year. Printers' devils never count out.

The moral is to be pursued through other notorious failures. The two most brilliant Irishmen of the day are Mr Whiteside<sup>1</sup> and Mr G. Moore.<sup>2</sup> Both are poets, wits, and scholars; both are consummately fine speakers. Mr Whiteside's celebrated state-trial speech in defence of his political opponent O'Connell, stands conspicuous among the great speeches of the Irish bar—as one of the greatest. Yet the failure of Mr Whiteside in the House of Commons was most overwhelming: and most deservedly. Fresh from the contentions of the native arena, he imported his polemical zeal into the Senate, where there is at least a philosophic contempt for sectarian squabbles: and in his first sentence he made one-third of the House of Commons his enemies for life. Think of a man making way in the British House of Commons by violently assaulting a large section of it! From the first moment he was condemned, and has never recovered the defeat. His powerful style, his graceful turn of thought, the neatness of his illustrations, and the solid grasp of his argument—in a word, the

<sup>1</sup> Solicitor-General for Ireland in the Derby Ministry. He attained ultimately a high position in the House. He was appointed Chief-Justice of the Queen's Bench in Ireland in 1866, and died in 1876.

<sup>2</sup> George Henry Moore, M.P. for Mayo. The best orator of the Tenant Right party. He died in 1870.

*The Father of another  
George*

finished oratory—are recognised and admired. But even the Inglises<sup>1</sup> take part with the Keoghs when Inglises and Keoghs have sat together in one assembly. A section was insulted—the whole were offended. Talking from the very opposite tribune, Mr Moore commits precisely the same fault, with some others. He is so full of talent that he has no room for tact. Too clever to repress a sarcasm, he talks at the Irish papers and not at the House, and consequently never makes way in the House. Besides this defect in tone—greatly exasperated during the fever of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill—Mr Moore errs in another respect. He repudiates the knack of the House of Commons, and is elaborate, ornate, polished, brilliant—and is not listened to. The House laughs at his epigrams, not because the preparation of the extempore is detected, but because the manner demands attention and announces conceit. In Ireland it is said, by the different parties, that the Moores and Whitesides are failures in the English House of Commons because they have “the brogue.” This is a blunder exposed by every day’s experience. Mr Whiteside does not speak with so much of an Irish brogue as the Duke of Argyll speaks with a Scotch brogue; and the burr of Lord Brougham was once the terror of London drawing-rooms. These second-rate Irishmen of to-day forget the Irishmen who have succeeded in the House of Commons. Burke’s brogue was notorious; Grattan was national in his accent, and never learned the trick of talking what the Dublin exquisites called “English.” Every singularity is to be avoided, perhaps, for comfort; and, in that sense, a strong, distinctive accent is to be regarded as a personal defect. But it is only a personal defect, and House of Commons records tell how little such

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. H. Inglis, M.P. for Oxford University. He defeated Peel in 1829, and continued to represent the University until his death in 1855. He was an old-fashioned Tory and a strong Churchman.

disadvantages count against tact and perseverance—meaning physique. In fact, the next best thing to a great advantage is a great defect—it is an advertisement. An obliquity in moral character tells so little against a bold and useful man, in actual life, and especially in the life of the Senate, that it is possible a statesman who stammered would be endured if he only brought in good budgets and practical bills. Mr Disraeli overcame the obstacles of race and creed, and reached the mastery of the most Christian House of Commons; and surely an Irishman, though with a brogue, might lead the English House of Commons, if his serviceable qualities brought him into prominence.

There are further examples and further arguments to be dealt with: the House of Commons is only to be comprehended by an examination of the peculiarities of its heroes.



# A Parliamentary Retrospect

THE SESSION 1852-3

## CHAPTER I

The New Parliament—The Villiers Motion—Lord Derby

*Nov. 13, 1852.*

THERE is no sneering at the opening of the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland. It is history, and very significant history too. The show has its absurd sides; but take any pageant to pieces, and forget the moral and the meaning, and what remains? The glass coaches and red harness, and the gilt, and the feathers, and the spears, and the wigs, and the beef-eaters, and the gentlemen-at-arms, are sillinesses; and the gaping boobies of men and women who crowd into the streets to look at the tinsel, and to shout, and to criticise whether the Prince isn't fatter, and the ladies-in-waiting are not thinner, are good butts to point a joke by. It is "barbaric pomp," as plain Mr Cobden said; and it is true that the parade might be less childish, less out of date, and be more substantially grand. But it is the greatest monarch in the world, passing through the streets of the greatest capital on God's earth, to meet the Senate of the vastest empire under the sun; and there is no laughing at the show, for it is solemn and serious history in process. The House of the Peers presents on such a day a sight at seeing which the veins swell—even very radical and philosophic veins.



Those ill-dressed, ungainly men, who crowd flustered to the bar, are not men who would look well accurately painted in an historical picture by a Delaroche; but they are the picked men of the crack countries of Europe, and, indirectly, in a chance way, loosely and laxly, they represent the intellect and the will, the passions and the aspirations, of a hundred millions of human beings. Those old peers, in their bizarre coats and cravats, are not as we fancy the senators of Rome looked when the barbarian conqueror intruded on them: but they are the titular aristocracy of a foremost nation—princes in revenues, true gentlemen in breeding, modellers of society, arbiters of manners; sections of them, too, leaders in the learning of their century. These grotesque, red-garbed, booted and spurred lieutenants of counties, and colonels of regiments, and generals of divisions, are not picturesque; but they are chiefs of the army which has conquered and kept the wonderful British dominions. Those petticoated, bald, helpless personages on the bishops' bench are not affecting—are, indeed, in semblances, ludicrous; but they are essential portions of the aggregate there brought into representation—they are delegates, symbols, of the religion which governs. And add the ornaments to the formal utilities—those delicate, exquisite women of the race which is most beautiful in women—glancing in dainty dresses and priceless gems—are they, too, suitable “members” in a Senate which is representative, reflective, of nineteenth century society? Pick the picture piecemeal, and each inch of the canvas is a marvel; and the whole work is a portrait of a huge fraction of the humanity in motion under the sceptre of the widely-worshipped little lady, who, as Queen, is speaking the words which are to head another one year's chapter of the annals of the world. There was true, genuine, legitimate grandeur for more than the flunkies in the Royal procession on Thursday, though the rain drizzled, though the road was plashy, though the democracy was damp, though the State was sodden. And there was grandeur in the scene of the royal speech; though he who drew it up was a Jew ad-

venturer, who scorned the constitution, and contemned the religion the assembly were there to reverence ; and though that speech was spoken to save from the destruction which pretentious mediocrity merits a set of the most thoroughly unprincipled office-mongers who ever, in the accidents of political intrigue, got hold of a government. Members for Manchester may be right in believing that the whole thing is a delusion—that the whole theory on which that scene is based is only an abstraction, and that the practice belies the theory ; and in contending that, in that massive machinery of representation—the people—the many—the masses—from Lancashire artizans to Hindoo ryots, have no real place. Granted. But is there not veritable greatness in a great imposition ?

There was more, in the inauguration of this new Parliament, than an æsthetical interest. What the gladiatorial games, as a public amusement, were to Rome, our Parliament is to us ; and we take, nationally, an intense delight in watching the individual combats—the party *mêlées*—and the personal duels—in which consist political motion, if not progression :—and we are attentive to all this from our instincts, because all this is on a national stage what we are doing daily in our private theatricals—because we live in and like these strifes—because we are a combative people. We personify principles, as a practical people : and a session is not to large numbers a history of questions carried or rejected, but a match, in which there are so many rounds, and as to which we are intensely concerned whether Benjamin Disraeli, or John Russell, or Wm. Keogh, or John Bright, or Wm. Gladstone,<sup>1</sup> or James Graham, or Bernal Osborne, leaves off best man. Especially is all this felt, and does all this influence, in an apathetic time when we are not vigorous in thinking our theories. But yesterday, above the æsthetic, and the gymnastic, there was the business interest. The question of the day is paramountly a financial one—whether the new systems of carrying on trade and commerce and paying taxes are to be

<sup>1</sup> W. E. Gladstone was four times Prime Minister. He died in 1898.

*Disraeli died 1881*

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revolutionised ; and, though there is wealth going, and still heavier taxes than we have would be and will be quietly paid, there could be no apathy in a matter, if only one of forms, as to finance, which would affect the money-making arrangements of every one of us. Rumours had been pouring fast and thick upon the world ; and there was doubt, curiosity, everywhere—dismay, too, in many places. Was there a split in the Cabinet ? Circumstantial stories were told of how daring Disraeli had resolved to eject Lord Derby from power, and was succeeding, by magical arts (brought by his ancestors from the East), in carrying a Tory Cabinet with him in the wildest liberal resolutions, in spite of the prudences entreated for by the rather slow, of late, Rupert of debate.<sup>1</sup> And, on the other hand, just as likely-looking accounts were current of Disraeli having been thwarted by the Rupert, of an emphatic reactionary speech being in Her Majesty's hands, of the consequent sulks of Mr Disraeli, and of an anticipated Palmerston and Russell-like *émeute* as soon as a Speaker could be huddled into the chair. Never was contrivance more complete to puzzle and to tease, and to excite a public. The secret was kept to the last moment ; and the *dénouement*, such as it was, had everything in its favour. In the surprise it was quite possible that the Mus that has proceeded from the Protectionist Ministry's rocks ahead might be taken for a more imposing animal.

But, though the rush of a mouse across the floor may get an exclamation in tribute to the suddenness of the start, people rearrange themselves courageously, and rather self-contemptuously, at first. And the consummation of all this gestation of nine months, from March to November, is, indeed, appallingly, ludicrously little. Men and Members gazed half-laughingly, half-sneakingly at one another as they came back from the House of Lords to their own lobbies. What ! a general election—twenty cabinet councils—last session lost—the recess negative—universal excitement—Parliament called together three

<sup>1</sup> See Bulwer Lytton's *New Timon*.

months before the ordinary time—and all only to hear Ministers say over again, and nothing more, precisely, *ipsissima verba*, with the t's crossed, what they said over and over again when they were being bullied, all last spring, and a good part of last summer. Turn the matter, twist it, pet it, paw it, how you will, that is the fact you get at at last—that Ministers say exactly, and no more than what they said before—which is, that they didn't like free trade, but that they will not resist the will of the country; and yet, that they will propose measures to diminish the injury done by free trade to certain classes. Ah, but *now* they have given up protection. No doubt: but did any one believe that they did not give it up two years ago; and did any one think it at all in danger nine months ago? Is it not the most astounding folly, all this affectation? Assembled and expectant Parliament, hear this speech—strong, and suspicious, and savage Liberals consider it—and then what do the Free-traders do? Why, they have to put up Mr Charles Villiers<sup>1</sup> to do in November what he proposed to do, and what they would not let him do, last February, namely, move a resolution declaratory that the House of Commons of England adopts irrevocably a free-trade policy.

Mr Villier's speech last night was nothing but a confession that he had been made a dupe of by his friends who had been made dupes of by the Ministers, and that—he must begin all over again. Lord John Russell, aping still the prominence of leader, though the studied coolness of the House might have told him that his self-assumed office is not completely acknowledged,—tried to be funny, on the attempt of Mr Disraeli to delude him—forgetting that the laugh was entirely against himself, inasmuch as during nine months Mr Disraeli had effectually and

<sup>1</sup> Charles Pelham Villiers, M.P. for Wolverhampton, the eminent Free Trader. He was appointed Judge Advocate-General by Aberdeen. He afterwards became President of the Poor Law Board, with a seat in the Cabinet under Palmerston. He continued to represent Wolverhampton until his death in 1898, at the age of ninety-six.

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profitably *succeeded* in deluding him. Mr Gladstone (who was cheered as if it was understood the leadership was to be his) repeated his speech of February: his indignation now is just what his indignation was then, at the same level, and for the same cause. Lord Palmerston was a facsimile of himself, in look, dress, voice and words, of last February. Mr Osborne made precisely the identical points, and they only did not tell as well because Mr Osborne was a little too vulgar in his style, and because the jokes had been heard or read before. Liberalism—liberal party—never looked so laughable; and it was all *felt* to be so silly a business, that the House was quite quiet and subdued—at least, if that is not the effect of an invasion of new memberdom; and there was no excitement, no spirit, no force, therefore, in the talking, so that the new men must have thought a “great debate” but a dull affair; and so that the *habitués* were glad it was all over by ten o’clock. There was humiliation inflicted on the whole Opposition by that scorching, conquering, gay, daring, sneering, short speech of Mr Disraeli. Power was in his voice—consciousness of triumph in the look and gesture; for at the moment he felt only delight in his reply to Lord John, and forgot, in the excitement of shining, the fearful threat implied in Mr Villiers’s notice of motion. That came on the Ministerial part of the House like a thunderbolt, and to most of the Liberals as a surprise; for the decision had only been come to the previous evening, at the meeting of Lord John’s intimates, among whom Mr Villiers was included—and at which dinner-party the royal speech was read, Mr Disraeli still accepting Lord John as Opposition leader, and so doing him the routine courtesy of giving him a copy of the speech the day before the meeting of Parliament. Evidently Disraeli did not exactly comprehend the significance of the announced free-trade resolution: for all his calculations rested upon his dexterous paragraph, recognising free trade in the speech, and then upon his Budget, which, doubtless, is a good one, and in the prestige of which he hopes to gain adequate power to construct out



of the loose House a practical majority. But Lord Derby, who had heard the news of Mr Villiers's motion, before he addressed the Lords, did understand exactly what he meant; and it must have been under the pressing sense of this unexpected blow that he made the very worst, stupidest, awkwardest speech he ever delivered. He was insufferably depressed and tame: and in the hurry of the moment he, practised as he is, plunged into very *gaucheries*, for the latter part of his stumbling piece of oratory consists of a wearisome admission that the House of Commons "might" beat him if they liked, and in a pitiful appeal to the "good sense" and "moderation" of Parliament to sink "personal" questions (Disraeli, who broke Peel's heart to save a colleague, deprecating personalities!) and to avoid "party" questions (the Protectionists to be cosmopolitan!) and to look at public affairs through the medium which the Duke of Wellington would have approved. For the rest Lord Derby made use of the clumsiest arguments to explain free-trade success: and for the first time he was not admired, even as an elocutionist; and he was chillingly listened to, once or twice laughed at and not at all applauded, except by one or two friends behind him.

Clearly the Cabinet is in a very difficult and dangerous position. The rank "humbug" of their Ministerial career is perceived; and their safety does *not* depend, as last night was universally said, on Disraeli getting Mr Villiers to allow the Budget to be talked out before the free-trade resolution is brought on. The Budget may be a good one; and it will give data for the next Ministry. But there must be a public rising at the imposture practised on the country—on the arrant villainy of the men who, in opposition, Protectionists, proclaim, in power, their readiness to carry out free trade as honestly as the authors of that policy would have carried it out (that is, Disraeli would now do as Peel would now do!): and, if a trace of political morality or public honour be left in England, these men will be dismissed in disgrace. There is yet, however, a doubt if there is not too much apathy for the



country to overcome the temptation of a good financial and general policy, which apparently Ministers mean; and, on the other hand, it is doubtful whether, supposing only a pure and simple free-trade resolution be proposed, Ministers may not vote for it, and so clear themselves, by power of face and insolence, out of the only difficulty—for it must be confessed the talk of reform is only a sham—which meets them. Undoubtedly there is marvellous genius for the management of men—unbounded hardihood—and plentiful resources—in Benjamin Disraeli, which may enable him to surmount this crisis: and, aiding him in spite of themselves, we have to remember that there is rank confusion among the Opposition—that no party but the Ministerial has any policy, good or bad—and that there would be internecine war between the Free-traders, should it become a question, Disraeli beaten, whom the Queen was to send for.

## CHAPTER II <sup>1</sup>

The Villiers Motion—Disraeli—The Palmerston Amendment—The Result of the Division

Nov. 27.

MINISTERIAL crises continue to possess interest; for although a change of men in these days does not mean a change of measures, it means a *bouleversement* of places, and so excites the countless sorrows and the innumerable hopes of the large classes who live upon that odd element in the British constitution—patronage. This week the chances were hardly equal enough to justify any positive belief that Government was going out on Villiers's motion; and, to some extent, the excitement was of that sham character which every day is got up by a world which insists upon gossiping away the doctrines of humanity. But there were some possibilities which could be assumed to be probabilities; and there were vague notions of personal risks and successes—in a word, there was a "situation" in the political play; and we have had a week which lay lightly on hand, and which will leave some fruitful lessons to the philosophers who do not take for granted that civilisation is half way to its terminus yet, however startling may be the passages of Crampton's or Napier's engines, and who, consequently, see a good deal to laugh at in the sayings and doings of this very remarkably enlightened nation.

There is sham from beginning to end in the whole business. In the first place, all the Manchester alarm about the danger to free trade was a huge sham: and, consequently, this hurried Villiers protest is a sham.

<sup>1</sup> [This paper refers to the Palmerston amendment on the Villiers Free Trade motion, which, for a time, saved the Derby Government.]

Manchester was *not* alarmed: and Mr Villiers and Lord John are profoundly convinced that free trade *is* quite safe: their object is—*encore* of the family Government. Then the second pretext, preferred by such ligneous individuals as Mr Frederick Peel, that such a motion as Villiers's ought to be carried in the way of a poetical justice to the Protectionist party, is a grand sham: for nobody in the House of Commons feels revengeful, and privately the gentlemen who are, publicly and politically, such arrant scamps, are endured and applauded—and no wonder, for, excepting such timorous persons as this young Mr Peel, who never once thought for himself, and therefore never committed an inconsistency, there are not a dozen men in the House of Commons whose careers have not been careers of constant conversion, for office or other as pecuniary sake, to ideas they had originally opposed. Manchester is, no doubt, honest and silly in supposing, while boasting that the Protectionists are in a contemptible minority in the country, that Lord Derby could, or that Mr Disraeli would, do anything to disturb what is called the “settlement,” but what was really only the first step in free trade, of 1846: and as to the remedial, compensatory tricks imputed to Mr Disraeli, why the Budget could very well be waited for, and the tricks could be taken on their merits, and left to the disposition of a decidedly free-trade House of Commons. But what Mr Villiers means by his motion, and what the Whigs mean by supporting that motion, is, simply to turn out Lord Derby that Lord John may once come in again. What certain of the Peelites mean by supporting it is, that it will be less difficult to get into office *viâ* Lord John than *viâ* Mr Disraeli, against a junction with whom the sham veneration of the Peelians not perfect memory would protest. All know very well that Mr Disraeli may carry as good if not better free-trade financial measures than themselves: while on general subjects the Whigs and Peelites are well aware that they are engaging the aid of Manchester upon false pleas, since between Whig party, Peel party, and Derby party, there is no difference what-

ever in general principles of politics—with this difference in favour of the Derby section, that all the tendencies, however little in earnest or solid, of Mr Disraeli are towards diminishing the power of the aristocracy and increasing that of the Crown and of the democracy. No doubt the chorus in this drama going on this week—the people who are to be distinguished from the public, for that has some power and influence over the club at Westminster—have distinct ideas as to what has passed; and are making comments—if they could only be heard. They do feel some symptoms of disgust at the “chivalry” and “personal honour” of Lord Derby, and at the conduct of the “assembly of gentlemen” appealed to by Lord Palmerston on Tuesday. It is all very infamous in the eyes of the people, for the party which attacked and broke the heart of Peel to stick to office as free-traders. But what have the people to do with the matter? The public elects and endures the House of Commons, which sanctions the swindle of a Derby and a Disraeli, and the dulness of a Walpole and a Pakington:<sup>1</sup>—and, after all, the people are greater sinners than the men who, like Disraeli, find the representative system a delusion, and so turn a great nation to their personal banker’s account.

*Ad interim*, while the enlightened British nation is recovering that old English state of mind in which Jew adventurers and combative earls would not have been selected as the leaders of a Christian and a commercial race, we may take Parliament simply in its at present popular aspect—as a public amusement—and so proceed to criticise the performances. The last few nights have had their interest, and these are worth a summing up. Tuesday was a great night in the House of Commons. The house was full—the first time that new chamber has seen a crush. In that magnificent assembly—for with the coloured light burning down on its gorgeousness,

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Pakington, M.P. for Droitwich. He became First Lord of the Admiralty in Lord Derby’s second and third administrations, and afterwards Secretary for War, and continued to hold office under Disraeli. He was defeated in 1874, was created Lord Hampton, and died in 1880.

one momentarily forgets that there is little reality in the representation—there was evident eager curiosity and ardent excitement—to see the fun; and fortunately the key struck at the beginning was sustained to the end: and the result was what the door-keepers call “a great debate.” Why? Because from first to last the question was a personal one—because nobody thought or talked of the abstractions of fiscal controversy—and because the debate consisted of personal attack, rejoinder, and re-cremination. Mr Villiers showed up Lord Derby—Mr Disraeli showed up Lord John and Mr Gladstone—Mr Bright showed up the Christophers and Pakingtons and Mackenzies, the wretched tools of Disraeli—Mr Seymour<sup>1</sup> showed up Mr F. Peel—and Mr F. Peel showed up himself—and Lord Palmerston showed up his former colleagues: and with so varied an entertainment, the audience was naturally satisfied. Mr Villiers—a man petted into one idea-dom—made a thoroughly fine speech, full of point, logic, spirited appeal, and wit: and Lord Derby, who was leaning over the balustrade of the gallery all the time, could not have avoided seeing that that compact mass of clever-looking men on the free-trade side did not, in any degree, believe in him,—thoroughly appreciated and endorsed the declaration of the orator that he (Villiers) could not perceive “chivalry” in the last six months of thimble-rigging; and, if his lordship has sense at all, he went home to his dinner that evening with a considerable deterioration in his lofty conception that because he is rather richer than the George Thompsons or Ernest Joneses<sup>2</sup> of British politics, he is as distinguished from them rather as Bayard and somewhat ludicrously like Sidney. And his mortification could only have been increased on finding that his friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who himself moved the amendment (strangely enough, for it was thought he would put up Walpole, and so reserve himself for that reply, at the

<sup>1</sup> Ker Seymour, M.P. for Dorsetshire.

<sup>2</sup> Ernest Jones, the well-known Chartist. He afterwards practised as a barrister. He died in 1868.

end of the debate, which there is not a man in the whole party, after himself, to give), did not perceive, as the principal point in Villiers's speech, the attack on the Premier. It was cruel; but Disraeli did not even refer to that point; and so far from being in the vicarious passion Lord Derby probably expected, he even went out of his way to compliment and flatter his old on-town friend, the member for Wolverhampton.

Yet Mr Disraeli was in a passion—in his own way—very self-possessed, though very fierce—quiet, but savage. Think of the week of baiting he had gone through about that terrible plagiarism<sup>1</sup> which nothing can explain away, and which no sophism can deny to have been the most contemptible literary larceny on record. Think of all the parallels made between his position now and that of Peel in 1846; and think that the question, as far as he is concerned, was whether he should leave the money of office and the glory of power for ever—for down now and Benjamin Disraeli would be trampled to death. There must be something superhumanly intrepid in the man (after committing such plagiarism, which had been ignominiously found out, and knowing better than any one of his critics the thorough miserable dishonesty of that political life of his which the House was called upon to arraign) who could, under such circumstances, and with the full consciousness that his audience was dead against him, ready at the slightest provocation to laugh or kick him into Coventry, rise up in the face of that Parliament and of the country, resolved to regain, by one vast effort all he had lost—to rout every one of his antagonists,—and to take a higher personal position than he had ever yet possessed. That was his resolution: and that was what he has done:—and yet people say the age of oratory is over! "*Toujours l'audace*" is the maxim of Danton, which Disraeli illustrates. And it was not, on Tuesday, the impudence (it is the only word) merely of manner, affected to conceal confusion: it was real, true, genuine, cool self-possession. The proof of this is in the fact that

<sup>1</sup> [The *éloge* on Wellington.]



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he seized upon the very last phrase of Villiers's speech, upon its very last point, and turned the whole of his own speech upon that very point—as if the arrangement and matter of his speech had been utterly unpremeditated—and as if it had only been incidentally provoked out from him, on a stray occasion. Villiers concluded by the argument that the Protectionist party had been doing ‘enormous mischief,’ in keeping open the question, by allowing foreign nations to suppose that we were undecided in our commercial policy; and that it was, therefore, necessary to settle the matter by this resolution. Disraeli took the charge at once, as if it were the only charge: and if you will carefully read his speech, you will see that the whole of it is an elaborated reply to the one accusation. The readiness of intellect indicated in that fact is something that should make psychologists stare. But the adroitness only begins with that. He gave, in the first few sentences, a hint as to what he meant his speech to be, in introducing the Peel, or personal pronoun “I,” and suggesting the connection between what *he* had said in 1846, since 1846, and what he was saying at that moment. He gave everyone to understand that he, the individual, ignored what the outsiders had been doing, ignored that there were Protectionists, nominally his party, behind him, and that he intended only a personal vindication. Take his speech in that sense, and it is a masterpiece—unanswerable: and, in effect, he has been the visible Protectionist party, incarnated in him, and, though not entirely irresponsible for what such bores and bunglers as Christopher and Mackenzie may have been saying and doing, it must be granted that, in unsuccessfully defending himself, he acquits the party. But it would be taking a wrong view of his remarkable essay on Tuesday night—an essay which I am disposed to think is the most prodigious intellectual effort ever made by an orator—to suppose that he was on the defensive. Not at all. From the commencing to the concluding sentence he was an assailant—ardent, relentless, victorious. His exposure of Lord John Russell—and, when he had to deal

with that name there was incredible malignant joy in his voice and gesture—was as overwhelming as his former exposure of Peel—and in word-painting, too: for Lord John is a being made up of “well-regulated party feeling;” and his ingenuity in making Mr Gladstone *particeps criminis* in the “enormous mischief” of the Protectionist party is as perfect a piece of cleverness in warding off an anticipated assailant as the House of Commons ever witnessed.

There can be no question whatever, that, had Disraeli failed to make a telling speech, Lord Palmerston would not have had the courage to come to the rescue of a Government, which in that case would have been past hope; and there can be as little question that, had Lord Palmerston not taken the first step, Sir James Graham would never have taken the second; and that, therefore, instead of there being, as there will now be, a mere Manchester minority against the majority of the whole House, the Ministers would have been overwhelmingly beaten. Mr Disraeli—personal friend and private intimate of Lord Palmerston—knew full well the value of, and the price of, the wary Viscount’s aid, and, also, its consequences; and, seeing to the end, and comprehending what a great speech might produce, how wonderful was that effort which he made?

Palmerston has done it all in this matter. And why? Because if Villiers’s motion had been carried, the Queen would have had to send for Lord John—because Lord John would not send for Lord Palmerston—and because Palmerston, consequently, has resolved that Lord John Russell shall never again be Premier of England. Now, let the country, which has a notion that it has something to do with the Government, fully understand that the club which is elected in rather a roundabout way, and which is called the House of Commons, is so composed that on the most serious of human questions—first, the question of the commercial policy of a trading people—and next, the question of what should be the political morality of public men—everything is decided by personal spites and individual spleens. Lord John Russell stopped the way.

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Lord Palmerston would not let Lord John go back to office : and Sir James Graham having once got a good example, seized the opportunity of seconding Palmerston, and so successfully, that Lord John himself was put in the ludicrous predicament of going into the same lobby with Disraeli, or of heading the Free-trade Hall section of "unpractical" Free-traders. Take the names who did not rush at the Palmerston amendment, and you will not find one among the many speakers of last night of note or weight in the country, or, what is more to the purpose, in the House ; and, as to last night, there could not have been the excuse Palmerston gave on Tuesday, that it was only an affair of words, and that Villiers and Disraeli really meant the same thing—for last night Disraeli gave every one broadly to understand—as he felt his way, he got bolder—that in his Budget he had certain "remedial" measures, which would be similar to those he had proposed in Opposition—those measures brought forward in Opposition having been rejected as frivolous by the old Parliament. What, after such explicit language—wrung from him by the manly however stupid, remonstrance of Lord Granby<sup>1</sup>—an honest Free-trader ought to do was clear—to insist on Villiers's motion being carried intact—first, for the abstract right of the word "just," but mainly because the carrying of the Villiers motion would have led to the resignation of a set of men who still unequivocally mean to ask the country to compensate a class for the few years' loss of a protection which enriched them for many years at the expense of the rest of the community. What all the taunts of the Free-traders could not do, the grotesque simplicity of Lord Granby effected, and compelled Mr Disraeli to reveal himself. Disraeli felt for the moment as Peel felt when the staunch and faithful squires fell away from him in 1846 ; and we may, perhaps, attribute it to the bodily infirmity of the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the moment, that he softened almost into tears in prematurely assuring his party that he was going to be true to them after all, and to swindle the nation, as all along promised. They did

<sup>1</sup> Lord Granby, afterwards sixth Duke of Rutland. He died in 1888.

cheer very violently at the pathos, in the peroration of which was the chink of rent; and no wonder, for it was complete news, and for that very reason should have shamed the scattered and envious Free-traders, Whigs, Peelites, and Palmerstonites, into urgent unanimity. Yet, what was the doing of last night? Careful arrangement among the Liberals to give a lease of power not only to a Tory Government, but to a class Government—still resolute on robbing hands for lands.

### CHAPTER III<sup>1</sup>

The Budget : Disraeli's Speech—The Budget : Gladstone's Speech—  
Sir John Pakington—Robert Lowe

THE conjurer has *not* jumped into the quart bottle : that is the great fact of the day. Words eaten in Hansard's full : ignominy incurred beyond estimate : vows forsworn beyond counting : wriggings beyond tracings : —and, at last, on the first test of capacity to govern a country, out goes the Derby Ministry under a load of contempt which not even six months' assiduous practice in meanness can enable them to bear. The new House, after all, reflects, only by a majority of nineteen, the universal feeling of distrust with which the nation regards the men whom an accident lifted into power and place. And, after Lord Derby, what ? We have the deluge ; what now ?

Gladstone and Disraeli faced one another last night and this morning—their speeches made the whole debate ; and it was the most superb parliamentary duel I ever witnessed. They are the two men of their time, tried in that wonderful assembly of picked men of England, where real manhood and veritable brain are brought to account with a rapidity which ruins all but the unmistakably genuine ; and, pitted against one another on this occasion, it was the struggle between the two principles of the day—club intrigue, with class manœuvre, against national faith in the integrity of nationalists—of English statesmen against petty tricksters. Two greater speeches than were delivered by these men were never heard in the House of Commons ;

<sup>1</sup> [Appearing Dec. 18, 1852, on the division on Mr Disraeli's Budget.]

Gladstone's (which, unhappily, is very badly reported in all the papers, from the necessity of the late hour) being a development of intellectual power, and of that eloquence which proceeds from commanding knowledge of mankind, of which even those who allowed most largely for his gifts, never suspected him. To understand the force of Gladstone's overwhelming reply, it is necessary to ascertain the peculiarities of Disraeli's startling three hours' oration; and to comprehend the effect which the long battle produced, it is necessary to remember that the circumstances were extraordinary, that it was a real debate, in which speech *did* affect votes, and in which each orator was exhausting his powers to obtain a majority. Such circumstances could only occur in this of all recent Houses of Commons; and such a scene could only result from the presence of two such master minds. Disraeli had been sitting there on his bench, undergoing the torture of taunts from numberless assailants for four successive nights, and he was weary of it; and it was apparently utter desperation which induced him, to the surprise of everybody, in a comparatively thin house, to rise at ten, and to precipitate the general summing up of the debate which should, according to all routine, have been delayed until the last moment. It was altogether strikingly out of order; and from first to last everything he said and did was in keeping—odd, eccentric, riskful, dangerous, desperate. This was exactly the impression he produced: that he had been behind the Speaker's chair, doing what Mr Pitt used to do—forcing vigour by a pint of brandy. He began with a strange voice and a strange manner, and it was a strange speech to the last:—but the speech of wild genius. Take his speech as a logical, presentable defence of his Budget and of the Government's financial policy (which let all who sympathise in *his* fall remember he is hardly responsible for), and it is a rambling, disconnected, galvanic effort, that needed not Mr Gladstone's exposure. But take it as the sort of speech he used to deliver when Peel was sitting on the Treasury benches, and it will rank equal to his best Peelic. Insolent he was—



furiously insolent: trampling, crushing, destroying all before him: and that his victims shrunk before his relentless sarcasm is not wonderful, for in his contempt for the Grahams and Goulburns,<sup>1</sup> and that class, he happened to be right. It was a speech which was at once accepted by the House, which filled fast after he rose, as a personal speech: and there is no doubt he had his audience thoroughly with him, roaring and laughing at him, and humouring him to the very top of his bent. Nobody paused, in the swift excitement he aroused, to consider whether this was exactly the tone of a Minister of the Crown—whether, for instance, that obscene and Tristram-Shandyish extract from the statistician's letter, about the "reserve of the producing power of the country," was not more fit for the cyder cellars than for the House of Commons. The House was lost in the wit, in the fun, in the savage, vindictive power of the orator, levelling right and left of him, and careless how he wounded even Lord Derby (who, sitting in the gallery, laughed heartily with the rest)—as in the passage, "The new Protectionist party have inherited our principles as well as our benches, and will fail, as we did." Had the division gone differently, all this would read splendidly—as a keen anticipation and enjoyment of a triumph. But read now it is the closing speech of a Minister; and, in that sense, how pitiable and how unworthy! Mr Disraeli has been both unfortunate and undeserving in his Ministerial career; and he has so arranged as to fall without men's pity. I fear he is down finally, and that he has not fallen gracefully.

It was a moment of great agitation, all men's nerves strung to the utmost tension, when—Disraeli having flung himself back—having delivered his strange peroration in a screech intensified by his Retschish attitude—and after all his insults, being still hoarsely cheered by the "gentlemen" behind him—Mr Gladstone lifted his frail body to make *his* bid for the government of his kind. The house, floor and galleries were crowded as they never

<sup>1</sup> Henry Goulburn, M.P. for Cambridge University until his death in 1866. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer under Peel.

were before—not even on the Villiers night—and the whole of that vast assembly was engulfed in a roar of cheers and countercheers, which were taken up again and again, and lasted fully five minutes. The orator could not get a word out for some time, and such was the fever around him, he would, probably, not have got a hearing at all but that the tones of his voice (his quiet manner never tells anything) intimated that he was in a passion, and was not going to be put down. Mr Gladstone's face is full of fire, vigour and pluck; and there was no mistaking its expression at that moment: at anyrate, it awed even the tipsy members—and, as usual, they were numerous—into sullen silence. And when he did get out what he wanted to say, he terrified people into silence. His words will read as quiet and cold enough; but no one who saw and heard will ever forget the scene. It was the dignified lofty rebuke from an honest, gifted nature of the impudent (there is no other word) outrage of Disraeli; and, as if by magic, that intense scorn which his voice and eye, rather than his language conveyed, altered the whole tone of the House, brought down a ringing, enduring cheer, and—changed the fate of the day. His speech—masterly, keen, crushing as it was of every part of the Budget—amounted to nothing: the exordium and the peroration, in which he appealed to the self-respect of the House not to continue in power a Government whose measures were tricks, and whose eloquence was personality, did all that the division does—turned out Lord Derby. So much for character *with* genius, against genius only—and Mr Gladstone himself carefully separated the genius from the principles of Disraeli. And was it not poetical justice that Disraeli should fall by the hand of the first lieutenant of Peel?

The Budget as a composition is a test of the capacity of the present Cabinet when in quiet council over cool claret and pine-apple. But the debate on the Budget, spreading over four brisk, vigorous, stirring, long nights, has been a ruinous test of the presentable talents of Ministers as debaters. Never was anything at once so ludicrous and so

melancholy. Lord John Manners,<sup>1</sup> Mr Walpole, and Sir John Pakington, have each made desperate efforts—each being a signal and even laughable failure. Think of Lord John Manners, who is about as manly as Goody Two Shoes, and whose reading has been confined all his life to keepsakes, rising, and with lisping assurance too, to answer one of the most closely logical and masterly financial speeches Mr Cobden ever made anywhere, and perhaps the very best he ever made in the House of Commons. The gods and the strangers should have grinned; but there is no reason to believe that either did; for, in this enlightened country, your son of a duke is regarded as a born statesman; and Lord John Manners is visibly impressed with the notion that he is quite a match—Lord John having travelled much, written a good deal of poetry, and seen most of the albums of good society in London—on a strictly commercial question, for a man who has made himself prominent above all the wonderful commercial celebrities of England for relentlessly hard common-sense, immense variety of knowledge, and unfailing accuracy. Later in the same evening, Walpole (who is even sillier looking than Manners) made his rotund display—the invocation of the name of the Prophet being followed by the production of the invariable fruit. A weaker, emptier speech was never heard; and the good feeling which he evidenced in the conclusion, in complimenting Disraeli, was spoiled by the manner—boyish; Disraeli crouching away from that elaborate friendship, under his intense sense of the ludicrous. Pakington, next (Tuesday) evening, was even worse. He is a good sort of man, with a clerky sort of capacity not to blot books and to keep papers in their places—indeed, I have no doubt Pakington mends pens to a miracle—and to these qualifications he has superadded the knack, which country justices get by making themselves busy at magistrates' meetings, of pouring out that streaky, interminable talk, which is the curse of our English public

<sup>1</sup> Lord John Manners, the present Duke of Rutland, the Lord Henry Sydney of *Coningsby*.

life—a talk of phrases, one phrase suggesting the other, to endless circumlocutions; a talk which is utterly independent of ideas, for what idea there is is in the phrase, and that is begotten of another phrase,—each and all of them being stock-property of twaddlers, and being invented by barristers and routine Members of Parliament. Pakington's fluency is something miraculously liquid; and he has got that sort of stamina—one of your little, broad-chested men, who never say they are tired—that if it was not understood on the Treasury bench that at a certain point his coat-tails are to be pulled, I believe he would go on for ever, in very delight at the circular facility with which he pours out his meaningless palaver. On Tuesday he put himself up as a debater,—in a full House—to answer the smart, telling hits of Bernal Osborne, and the heavy, pounding blows of Graham; and at it he went—in a speech which was all exordium, for a Pakington peroration could not at all be got at in one Parliament,—and an exordium, too, which was without point, sense, argument, or illustration—all fatuous futilities and complacent frivolities, adding nothing but an ore-rotundo “oh yes, oh yes!” to a contingent proclamation of something which didn't arrive that night, and of course wearying the House into a bad temper. Well, these men are the crack orators of the Ministry, after Disraeli and Derby! On considering their qualifications, one feels compelled to acknowledge that Lord Derby did show judgment when in June, 1851, he refused to take office, because he didn't think a Government could get on with these same gentlemen. Lord Derby was quite right.

No doubt we must bear in mind that the defects of the Minister are magnified by the “array of talent” the Opposition can collect against them; while the picture is rendered more appallingly melancholy by the solid, silent background of the “party.” Tories of England! recognise the fact that, in defence of your Tory Government's Budget, only one man, outside office, can be found to make a speech which had a chance of being listened to, or of effect, and that man was a renegade from the Radical ranks

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—Sir Edward Lytton. He was listened to; but I question the effect—for what he said was worthless, and it was said in a way which could not recommend it. Sir Edward's appearance is not happy; and on looking at him, you wonder how such a dismal-looking personage could turn out some of the best novels of the day. And there is no brightening of the eyes or face when he is in action: he lifts his voice up and down, and he sways his body backwards and forwards, and he wields his long ape-like arm right and left with a dull, heavy regularity that suggests nothing of the emotional, poetic intellect he insists in all his prefaces upon possessing. He had got his speech off this day week; and he plodded through it as a dull boy would through one of Chatham's "My lords, I am astonished and shocked to hear" orations. But he was cheered, no doubt; and his complete turn-about into a Derbyite deserved the Tory applause, and he sat down intensely satisfied, plunging into an orange with the avidity of a Demosthenes, after having upset a Philip for the sixth time—seeming, as he sucked it, and yellowed his pale face with it, supremely ludicrous. The Whigs, Peelites, Radicals, though they had been silent and patient and quiet while he was getting through his speech, were quite alive to the fun of the whole thing; and such a yell of laughter as they gave when Mr Gladstone, in his solemn, dry tones, expressed his doubts if any man had impugned the character and the conduct which Bulwer had volunteered to justify, ought to have dissatisfied the author of *Pelham* with public life. Disraeli spoke subsequently of the "masterly speech" of his hon. friend, and was glad enough, very likely, of the aid; and in the same way he would speak of the "masterly speech" which Lord Jocelyn delivered in favour of Ministers. Some of the free-trade speeches have been excellent; pre-eminently that of Mr Robert Lowe<sup>1</sup> on Monday. Mr Lowe's was a refined, subtle analysis of the Budget, not aiming at hits

<sup>1</sup> Robert Lowe, M.P. in turn for Kidderminster and Calne. He was the first member for the University of London. He held various offices and was Chancellor of the Exchequer in Gladstone's first administration. He was created Viscount Sherbrooke in 1880, and died in 1892.



or technical exposures, and produced a great effect, as is demonstrated by the repeated reference made to him subsequently by all the principal speakers in the debate. Mr Lowe came into the House with a vast reputation for ability of varied kind, the reputation being all the more telling that it was not a reputation among the nation, but in society and about clubs; and he has apparently taken advantage of the prestige in his favour to glide, with tact, into a House of Commons position,—but because of the tact, not because of the prestige.



## CHAPTER IV<sup>1</sup>

The Aberdeen Ministry—Lord Aberdeen—The Peelites—Whigs  
and Radicals

A HAPPY new year is no longer a polite, fatuous wish. It is a great fact. For has not Lord Aberdeen discovered that, in politics, there are only distinctions without differences; that "the period has arrived" when men of "all parties," whose differences "circumstances and recent legislation had effaced," could join together in carrying on the "public service;" that, in short, we are a happy family—that the nation is a single vast party—that we have knocked both Whigs and Tories on the head—and that, under a "combination Ministry," representing all the "distinctions without differences," we may progress in comfort, innocent, for ever, of a single division? Peace in the House of Commons, and good-will among Members, are the conditions under which we open 1853. We agree that we agree—acting on a sudden thought, and swearing eternal friendship: and we initiate a new Paxton architecture—a senate *sans* the lobbies. Happy people—happy year—which finds a "teller" as remote as a megatherium.

Very clearly, public opinion is in favour of the arrangements effected by the Court, through the agency of Lord Aberdeen; and the new Government will get a very fair trial. All the indications show that the "coalition" is based on the broad principle of gentle Conservative progress, with thorough administrative departmental efficiency, carrying on the Queen's Government, and not stopping the people:—which is just the solitary political principle of

<sup>1</sup> [Jan. 1, 1853.]

this prosperous and apathetic—otherwise philosophical—era.

Great faith may be placed in the necessities of the new Government : for the necessities will compel good measures. In the first place, if all these men—the first of their day, and who have collective and individual reputation to lose—cannot hit on a good Budget, then a good Budget is impossible—financial revision—equitable principles—impossibilities. Their foreign policy cannot but be consistent, and dignified, even though the results upon the liberation of enslaved Europe may remain *nil*. There is no Louis Philippe for Lord Aberdeen to give way to ; and there is a Palmerston to prevent Lord John or Lord Clarendon<sup>1</sup> (for it seems understood that Lord John only starts in the Foreign Office to save appearances) giving way to Austria ; while Lord John himself is known to suspect Louis Napoleon. And a political junction with the United States is more than feasible, in a Cabinet of which Lord Granville<sup>2</sup> (who is perhaps the most advanced of all the men of the Ministry) is a member. Then the difficulty of Ireland disappears when Irish Liberals take office, and in so doing guarantee a decent Irish policy. As to the Reform Bill, we need not expect it carried for two or three years, or that it will be worth very much when it is carried ; for the people are not demanding real reform, and their wishes won't be anticipated. But a beginning, after twenty years' rest in reform, will be a great deal ; and if what *débris* of democracy is left complains of insufficiency, the retort is—"You are getting as much as you asked for ; if you want a revolution, make it." Then there will be other beginnings—in national education (to which some people attach great importance, and it is well to satisfy everybody)—in administrative reform—that is, the economy which is consistent with efficiency. There are many

<sup>1</sup> Lord Clarendon became Foreign Secretary in 1853. He afterwards served under Palmerston and Gladstone in turn in the same post. He died in 1870.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Granville was President of the Council in the Aberdeen Ministry. He was afterwards in turn Colonial Secretary, Foreign Secretary, and Colonial Secretary again in various administrations. He died in 1891.

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Radical plans which will be left untouched—but what would you have? The country which endured Lord Derby and Lord Malmesbury<sup>1</sup> must have been the most reactionary country in Europe; and it will be a triumph to obtain acquiescence in one-half what Lord Aberdeen,<sup>2</sup> Lord John Russell, Sir James Graham and Mr Cardwell have promised to do—what the names of Keogh, Villiers, Osborne and Molesworth indirectly pledge the Ministry to attempt. The distinctions and the differences remain, although Prince Albert and Lord Aberdeen do not think so; but up to a certain point—the point at which an apathetic nation will acquiesce in obviously-required improvements—easy friendship between antecedent opponents is quite manageable; and when Lord Derby's 310 (when men tell fibs they are circumstantial: mark the 300—and 10) begin to notice that the country has got exactly a representative government—reflecting average Conservatism and average Liberalism—they will fall off, and, for the sake of their seats, take rank in the new universal party, which includes everybody and everything. Let the country be assured that it has many more “bowing” acquaintances than Mr Christopher.

There is this palpable peculiarity about the new Cabinet—that it will be republican—without a leader. In Peel's Cabinet there was only one man, Peel; he did not consult them; he communicated to them. In Lord John Russell's Cabinet, the family gave way to the man who had brought the “circle” together. In Lord Derby's Cabinet no one could possibly venture to have an opinion but Derby and Disraeli—and Disraeli could well affect to follow Derby, since he had previously arranged that the conceited Earl should talk unconscious Disraeli-isms. But Lord Aberdeen is only the nominal Premier, and has power, simply because he is the confidant of the Court.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Malmesbury, Foreign Secretary under Lord Derby. He filled the same office again under Derby and Disraeli in turn. He was appointed Lord Privy Seal in 1874. He died in 1889.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Aberdeen, the head of the Coalition Ministry. After the fall of his Government in 1855 Aberdeen never held office. He died in 1860.

He is honest—patriotic—anxious that his premiership should be distinguished by national satisfaction; and it is not possible that, at sixty-eight, his motives in taking power could be other than the purest and noblest. And his influence will be proportionate to the confidence that he is above and apart from the ambitions and schemes of the moment—that he is aiming at national good. But, perforce, he will have to think through others, and to decide on a balance of arguments presented to him by his various colleagues. Lord Aberdeen, at this moment, is precisely what might be expected of a peer who early entered on the magnificent education which Parliament provides—who was forced into ambition, and offices, and trust, and who, driven to hard work, was compelled to eschew delights and indolence, and so urged and kept in the regular habits which preserve mental and physical health. He never had cleverness—and he never had a seat in the House of Commons, which might have provoked the senatorial knack which so often passes for cleverness and is, in truth, a very good substitute. But he was from the first, as his positions proved, a soundly judging, accurate tactful, reliable man; and the dispassionate, cool head always learning, always observing, is, after forty years of work and watching, full of wisdom—which is, remembrance of the results of observation. Of all men known to the public, he is especially fitted for the task assigned by the Queen, of being the centre of a combination of parties: for with “all the talents” in one Cabinet, amenity is preferable to genius in the chief. Mediocrity with sixty-eight years is sublimity, and suggests no rivalry to rising young fellows of fifty and sixty, like Graham, Palmerston, and Russell. A Premier of sixty-eight speaks with a force that Lord Derby, with the fatal facility of vigorous fluency, could never attain; and those who heard the speeches of these two men recently, in the House of Lords, would only contrast favourably the heavy, low-voiced, slow, conversational, or rather soliloquy-like style and manner of austere, grey-headed, large-chested, but clearly feeble Lord Aberdeen, with the “marry-come-up” “petulance”

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and pettiness which characterise the mind and nature of Lord Derby, and which not all the rotund, flowing, gentlemanly style of his soulless balderdash can hide even from those who believed that the man who had an earldom, being fourteenth earl, with fifty thousand a year, and who could yet prate as well as George Thompson—though not quite so well as Henry Vincent<sup>1</sup>—must necessarily be an orator, a man of genius, and a statesman. Lord Aberdeen never could speak; and, doubtless, after his experience in the Peers, does not see the appropriateness of a debating style, such as Lord Derby's or the Duke of Newcastle's,<sup>2</sup> in an assembly which is essentially judicial and deliberative. Thus he made his momentous announcement on Monday, just in the way in which he would talk across a council table—and disconnected, loose, and ungainly as it all sounded, it reads dignified and becoming enough in print.

Then, which of the Peelites is to lead? Mr Gladstone should, on the score of immense mental power, and a capacity for exposition and debate, which has been improving yearly (one sure sign of genius), and which, when he gets rid of some lingering defects, such as a too rotund up-and-downish management of the voice, will constitute him the first House of Commons speaker—which is not being an orator—of his time, Disraeli not excepted. Excepting Mr Gladstone, there can hardly be said to be a first-rate intellect among the Peelites in office. Sir James Graham was always a lieutenant: he never had originality of view or policy; and all the reputation he has ever obtained has resulted from his power of arranging details—as an administrator. His life presents a mass of silly sayings and silly doings—a weary collection of contradictions; and a man without high character—the conse-

<sup>1</sup> Henry Vincent. A Chartist orator. Molesworth called him the Demosthenes of the Chartist movement. He afterwards became a very successful lecturer. He died in 1878.

<sup>2</sup> Duke of Newcastle was Colonial Secretary and Secretary of State for War in the Coalition Ministry. The War Office was separated from the Colonial Office in 1854, and Newcastle chose the War Office. He resigned in 1855. He was again Colonial Secretary in 1859, and died in 1864.



quence of independent, comprehensive views—can never lead either a Cabinet or a House of Commons. He is no doubt a debater of some importance; because, having got his cue from someone, he masters the subjects he talks of; and since Sir Robert Peel's death, he has been regarded as succeeding to Sir Robert's position in the House; and, with the prestige of supposed lead among the Peelites, his *saue* manner, and correct, courteous enunciation of truths about principles and parties, have been generally mistaken (the House was always so very still and attentive) for power and force. Then who is there after Sir James? Mr Sidney Herbert<sup>1</sup> has £50,000 a year, and will be an earl—great merits; and he is possessed of average capacity, some ambition, great honour, a pleasant voice, and a good manner—great qualities; quite fitting him for Parliament and justifying his seat in the Cabinet. Mr Cardwell is only a half-educated statesman yet: and he has not that personal position—that pre-eminence resulting from the influence over many private friendships—and the tact, that is better than talent, which would render him now as useful as he will in a few more years be to Lord Aberdeen, in a Cabinet. If Lord Aberdeen is to keep the lead in his own party (for even in a republican Cabinet, as in republican States, the first man is the best man), Lord Aberdeen must trust entirely to Mr Gladstone, who, in turn, must rely altogether for the position he is to take upon the measures pertaining to his department which he may bring forward. The present House of Commons will never forget his brilliant and crushing reply to Disraeli, if for no æsthetic reason, because that one speech upset a Ministry; but a House of Commons—they are all the same by a collective instinct—give votes and “hear-hears” only to those who are constantly at work—constantly sustaining great reputations; and if Mr Gladstone can produce a Budget which will satisfy—first, the Cabinet;

Sidney Herbert was Secretary at War in the Coalition Ministry. He resigned in 1855. He became War Minister in 1859, but his labours for Army Reform broke down his health. He was made Lord Herbert of Lea in 1860, and died in 1861.



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next, the House ; and, next, the country—he will have the Government of this extremely-enlightened and free country at his disposal for the next ten years at anyrate. The Duke of Newcastle, of whom people who judge by what they hear, and not by what they see and study of men, are predicting so much, has only one great quality—contempt for the Earl of Derby. That in itself is a sign of a discerning mind,—but the catalogue of merits ends there ; and that would be no merit but that the contemner is a duke. His Grace is otherwise anti-ducal in joviality, and even jocularly of manners—in the absence of pretence—in faith in popular justice and anxiety for popular applause : tendencies which may have something to do with the coming history of the Aberdeen Government. But he is a mediocre man in abilities—fluent, but not gracefully so—sadly tedious, and always commonplace.

But it is a question, whether in the Cabinet Lord Palmerston won't be what he recently has been in the House—"master of the situation," arbiter between Whigs and Peelites and Radicals, and maker of motions to which everybody will have to consent and with which everybody will be discontented. Sir Charles Wood<sup>1</sup> will be nobody among the Whigs—he is nobody anywhere : for he is an uncertain and an unequal man—flowing over with all sorts of official knowledge, but twice out of three times applying it all wrong, and precipitating (as *vide* his Budgets) the most extricable confusion. Lord Clarendon (and whether he is in or out of the Cabinet seems at present a matter nobody is positive about, though everybody agrees he soon is to be, if he is not already, in), has not the character (he made the greatest mess of it of any lord-lieutenant on record) to lead the Cabinet, and has not the readiness to be useful as a debater, which does not

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control. He had been Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord John Russell. He afterwards filled various offices. He was created Viscount Halifax in 1866, and died in 1885. It is said that he was a man of greater influence in the Governments of which he was a member than his contemporaries appreciated.

matter, as the Lords don't need debaters, and, if they did, have plenty in the Government already: and as Foreign Secretary, to which post he is contingently appointed, he can only be a diplomatist, working away at tricks leading to nothing—or into difficulty—seldom making his appearance in speeches, and, I predict, in his new career, adding nothing to his reputation—though, checked by the Prince and the rest of the Cabinet, he can never do much harm to his country. The hopes of Whiggery rest with Lord John and Lord Granville—Lord John to sustain the position of the family in the Commons, and Lord Granville in the Lords. Lord John will, doubtless, have the arrangement of the Reform Bill; Lord Lansdowne,<sup>1</sup> with Granville, of the Education Bill; and probably, in order to be left to themselves in these matters, the Whigs will let the Peelites, per Mr Gladstone—general principles being agreed on—do what they like as to the details of the Budget; and the management and increase of the army and navy, per Sidney Herbert and Graham. But there is a firm, positive, obstinate, dogmatic person in the Cabinet who is a party in himself—the Radicals—viz., Sir William Molesworth. He is there to watch for the people that popularity is properly looked after—to justify his accepting office by insisting upon very Liberal measures;—which he will afterwards privately tell his constituents that, between themselves, he was entirely the means of securing. There is great division of opinion among Radicals as to the propriety of the course taken by Molesworth and Osborne in joining the “coalition”—and the doubts particularly attach to Mr Osborne, since, with but a very vague notion of what the intentions of the Government were, he took office, and joined them without the means of influencing or controlling them, since he did not get a seat in the Cabinet. But—without supposing that these gentlemen are playing the part of the fox against the bear—it must be admitted, on a fair consideration, that they did quite right: just as, for the same reasons, in reference to Ireland,

<sup>1</sup> Marquis of Lansdowne. A moderate Whig. He refused a dukedom. He died in 1863.

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Mr Keogh, Mr Sadleir,<sup>1</sup> and Mr Monsell<sup>2</sup> have accepted office. The presence of Sir W. Molesworth—all the more valuable a man now for his primness, his pedantry, and his dogmatism—is a guarantee that the Cabinet will be Liberal: and as long as Mr Osborne holds his office, the Radicals may be sure that no Toryism is being intended. The question which they had to consider when office was offered to them was—would they more advance the cause of progress by refusing: and to that query there could be but one answer. It is useful to have politicians in advance of the age—in newspapers, in books, and on out-of-door platforms: but the truth is, such politicians have no business in the House of Commons. The very extremist Liberalism which there could be a chance of the voting power of this country accepting will, it is most likely, be proposed by the present Government: and unless it be a correct theory that, because a man holds certain extreme or Radical opinions, he is never to enjoy the glories of public life—official position, power, and patronage,—and is never to join the men who will only consent to adopt those opinions modified, and who could never effect the accomplishment of the modification without the aid of Radicals,—then Sir Wm. Molesworth and Mr B. Osborne have done quite right. A man in the House of Commons, whether reformed or not reformed, should do the most he can with the materials at his disposal: and, while awaiting for the constitutional changes which he may think will bring his own extreme opinions into fashion, should accept instalments, and should use his influence with the Ministries and the House to hasten those instalments by backing the Governments which will give them against the Governments which will not give them, and which thus would delay the

<sup>1</sup> John Sadleir, a member of "the Pope's brass band." He was a Lord of the Treasury in the Aberdeen Ministry, which office he had afterwards to resign. He was implicated in the Tipperary Bank and other frauds, and committed suicide in 1856. The character of Mr Merdle in *Little Dorrit* is shaped out of him. His brother, James Sadleir, was expelled from the House.

<sup>2</sup> William Monsell, M.P. for Limerick City until 1874, when he was created Lord Derby. He filled various minor offices and died in 1894. He was an advocate of Liberal Catholicism and Political Reform, but opposed to Home Rule.

desired changes. This does not mean to say that a man who had been agitating for universal suffrage, or repeal of the Union, should seek a seat in the House of Commons, and the moment he gets there join the least Tory Government. It means that the men who agitate for results for which Parliament is not prepared should stay out of the House of Commons if they mean to make the House only a platform for protests, and do not mean to manage the House by party tactics; and that when gentlemen of extreme opinions join in a Government other men of less extreme opinions, but tending in the same direction, they should enter upon office with a declaration that they surrender no principle—that they reserve all their individuality; but that, for a time, in the hope of advancing what they eventually mean, they sink their single in a collective opinion. This was the theory Sir Geo. Ward<sup>1</sup> acted upon when, representing Sheffield, he took office under the Whigs; and this was what Mr Roebuck said (and Mr Roebuck is punished for a life of ill-nature in being left out now) when he succeeded Ward in that most jealous of all Radical constituencies. Ward was wrong in taking office under the Whigs, for he must have known that the Whigs are the most aristocratic, selfish, exclusive, of all parties—Liberals only in their principles—Tories in details; and Mr Roebuck was only conditionally right in his frank announcement. But there are special sureties in the case of this Government which remove all objections to the course pursued by the two Radical members—one Molesworth, being chosen to talk colonial popularity; and the other, Osborne, being adopted for the sake of silencing him;—and, for the sake of the Radical cause, and that honest, able men may not for ever be deterred from serving the cause of the people, it is to be hoped that Southwark and Middlesex will send back and encourage their favourites to their careers of public usefulness in Parliament.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Geo. Ward. He was appointed the High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands in 1849. He then became Governor of Ceylon, and was in 1860 transferred to Madras, where he almost immediately died.

## CHAPTER V<sup>1</sup>

The Navy Estimates—The Madiai Resolution—The Madiai Debate—  
Frederick Lucas

THIS has been a week devoted by the House of Commons to unconscious exposures of its own thorough want of earnestness in "foreign policy." Lord Palmerston, on Thursday, dressed in deep mourning (for Lord Melbourne)<sup>2</sup>—black to the studs and to the kids, and yet talking in the most intensely and successfully jocular vein, was an exemplar of the system—elaborate affectation of liberal and Protestant grief—real *poco-curante*-ism.

Mr Cobden, who can see every inconsistency but his own, last night pointed out, in a few words, the utter hollowness of all the elaborate affectations, on the part of the responsible statesmen, of faith in the pacific notions of the French Emperor, by saying, addressing himself personally to Lord John Russell—How is it that you, who find so much fault with the press for expressing distrust, nevertheless act distrust—declare your trust, and yet keep your powder dry? The comment on the whole debate raised by Mr Disraeli was the next order of the day—a proposal, which no one dreamed of opposing, for increasing the Navy Estimates by nearly half a million. In Downing Street, excellent "relations" with the Tuileries—in the House of Commons, responsible abuse of the newspapers for being British; but still, "activity" in the dock-yards.

What Mr Disraeli meant by his forcing on the question about France is clear enough. As the colleague of the Lord Malmesbury who praised the Napoleonic system, he had no right to abuse a Whig statesman for condemning

<sup>1</sup> [Parliament reassembled, after the Christmas holidays, on 10th Feb., but no important business was transacted. The present sketch appeared in print on Saturday, 19th Feb.]

<sup>2</sup> Lord Beauvale and Melbourne, with whom both titles ceased.



that system—the one being just as great an interference as the other with the internal affairs of France. And Mr Disraeli's anxiety about peace is the anxiety, as he says, of "Sidonia's" philosophy, of a man who by race and creed is without a country, and who looks on politics without prejudices, patriotic or otherwise. But as leader of Opposition—heading a party without a plan or a policy, he finds it necessary not to be silent, and seeing nothing objectionable in the measures, he must attack the men of the Government—assaulting them in detail in consequence. Thus his speech last night was a personal speech; and all its hints told, because evidently he had nothing tangible to deal with but the follies and indiscretions of individual members of the Cabinet. He made them look ridiculous; a small step for an Opposition, but the only one they can take when, at the same time, they have nothing to oppose—and, what is even more perplexing, nothing to propose. Mr Disraeli, always an actor, acted well on this occasion, because he was what tenors term in great voice—in high condition; and he succeeded in his object, not merely felling Sir Charles Wood, and flaying Sir James Graham<sup>1</sup> (for we may rely on it Sir James *did* speak the words Disraeli quoted), but in amusing the crowded and new House, which has found Parliament dull, and wanted enlivening.

In the excess of dignity assumed by Lord John, in reply—and it must have been galling to the indignant "leader," that no sooner did he get on his legs than the crowd which had hung on Disraeli dispersed towards dinner—you can see how the playful references to the "great man" who was to be crushed by the Coalition Cabinet into a "small room" had hit the weak side of one who is nervously afraid that people think he has "gone down," in taking a subordinate place, after having enjoyed the first; and in the bitter but bungling wit of the enraged Graham, who, in his fierceness, ventured on reviving the joke of the Wellington funeral oration, it was easy to

<sup>1</sup> [Sir Charles Wood and Sir James Graham had attacked Louis Napoleon in their hustings speeches, at the general election.]



detect the mortification which had been inflicted upon one who chiefly presents himself to the nation as the, *par excellence*, "discreet" statesman.

Then take Mr Disraeli's "portrait" of Lord Aberdeen, as painted by Lord John Russell—and it is an easy calculation that Lord Aberdeen and Russell cannot be happy together for the next week. Take the sketch of Sir William Molesworth—the Radical seized, taken to court, and converted into a Cabinet Minister—and you may estimate how far the apprehensions of the philosophical baronet that he is beginning to be doubted will induce him to cause confusion among his colleagues.

All these jeers and sneers and sarcasms told all the more from the debonair airs Mr Disraeli assumed of leadership of the strongest party—of absolute superiority over the men whom he was holding up to ridicule. As defender of Louis Napoleon, who had not been ashamed to say he was a *parvenu*, Mr Disraeli ventured on a humble boast, that he was a "gentleman of the press"—"it is my only escutcheon"—and obviously the Cabinet which consisted of all the experiences and all the discretions did not relish lampooning from a man who talked, not like a statesman, but like a lively novelist. Heavy, indeed—heavier for the anger they could not conceal—were the replies. The utmost that Lord John and Sir James could say was, that Mr Disraeli was not in earnest about peace (which he had not pretended to be), and that he talked from his commonplace-book. Better do that, he might have retorted, than talk commonplaces. The Government came out of the debate damaged by the Wit—the Wit was successful, because he put the Government in a passion. Whether Mr Disraeli's tone, as leader of responsible Opposition, is what it should be, is very questionable. He probably risks creating doubts of that nature on the assurance that responsibility is distant, inasmuch as the Coalition Government is too strong to suffer, in collective strength, by caricatures of its personalities; and meanwhile the House cheers him and laughs with him because fair play admits that the men who turned him out are the

proper victims of his vindictive jests. Too far he does not go; for his speech is, after all, carefully framed so as to please in that high quarter whence much of the war-gale blows; for instance, what will Leopold say to the compliment, that he is the wisest and most accomplished prince in Europe—though the phrase, in delicacy to Prince Albert, should have been wisest monarch?—and in all the relentless sarcasm he poured on the Treasury benches, there was one man he spared: that Lord Palmerston who was turned out by Lord John for anticipating all the commendation which Lord John afterwards gave to Louis Napoleon. To the replies of Lord John and Sir James Graham, Mr Disraeli is indifferent; but he avoids rousing the only man whom he respects and fears. Mr Cobden, in both these particulars, was more clumsy. He sneered at Palmerston, and he taunted the Court—speaking of it as “that influence which we must not mention in this House.” The kind of advice which Lord John so circuitously recommended to the Tories—an advice they will take on Thursday next on the Jew Bill, when Mr Walpole leads the Christian resistance—to get rid of Mr Disraeli—is quite available to the Peace Party. Setting the country and the Queen by the ears is not exactly the most practical method of obtaining disarmaments by agreement.

This talk about France, directly as provoked by Mr Disraeli, indirectly as suggested by the Navy Estimates—always, and this year more than ever, the statistical comment on our “good relations” with foreign powers—was preceded on Thursday by a confused and unsatisfactory discussion of Mr Kinnaird’s resolution<sup>1</sup> asking Her Majesty to protest to the Duke of Tuscany against the continued imprisonment of the Madiat; and it is curious to study the utterly different set of principles upon which these debates proceeded. In the French debate, every one of the speakers spoke upon the assumption that our press was in error to attack Louis Napoleon, on the ground that he was a potentate in possession, and that we, as a nation, had no

<sup>1</sup> The case of the Madiat was one of religious persecution in Tuscany.

right whatever to interfere with the internal affairs of another nation. But in the Madiai debate, everyone but Mr Henry Drummond, whose trenchant common-sense never misses the point, took as completely for granted that it was our business to be nationally "*defensor fidei*"—a Protestant Quixote. Observe the classes who were most active in aid of the ex-courier Francesco Madiai (comparable, at least, to St Paul, in respect of his antecedents), and you will find that they are exactly those classes who detect the ungenuity of criticising Louis Napoleon. They will not, or do not choose to see, that if our press has no right to be propagandist of political liberalism in France, our Exeter Hall is disentitled to be propagandist of religious liberalism in Tuscany, and that our Stafford House is precluded from propagating ethnological enlightenment in the United States. This, however, is a blunder which more than the classes Mr Disraeli represented in his deprecations last night may be said to represent. That haughty *Times*, which denounces the despotism of Louis Napoleon, is the same arbitrate journal that condemns Mazzini<sup>1</sup> and Kossuth<sup>2</sup> for their attempts to get rid, in Austrian territories, of precisely the political system considered to be so obnoxious in France; and the haughty *Times* is apparently quite innocent of perception of this interesting inconsistency. Mr Disraeli would be logical in advising amiability about Louis Napoleon, if he had not been the colleague of the Lord Malmesbury, who laid it down as a rule, in his dispatch to Mr Scarlett, that the Protestant Ministers of Protestant sovereigns are bound, in duty to be the champions of Protestants. So that Mr Disraeli is as inconsistent as the *Times*. And the *Times* and Mr Disraeli and the class called British statesmen generally are all blundering, in their various propagandas, in their assumptions that we are in a position to teach the nations how to live,—liberally or religiously. Mr Drummond puts our incompetency in one way—first, that propagandism is inexpedient, and next, that it is silly, unless

<sup>1</sup> The Italian patriot. He died in 1872.

<sup>2</sup> The Hungarian patriot. He died in 1894.

we follow up protocols by war-steamers. Mrs Tyler<sup>1</sup> puts it another way—that our House is not in that order which entitles our philanthropy to go gadding. Mr Lucas<sup>2</sup> defines “religious toleration” to be the toleration of all religions, and suggests that we have no business to wail over incarcerated ex-couriers, unless we are prepared to weep over ravished nuns of Minsk. All these various views with their contrasting illustrations, put before us in the course of a single week—events pointing theories—cannot fail to teach us a useful lesson. Our position is that of the enlightened and enthusiastic philanthropist, not many years ago, who took the chair at a meeting in the cause of “labour,” and suffered from his chivalrous appearance in public by being at last caught by the bailiff. Or like that other, as notorious and as enlightened philanthropist who crossed to America in order to vindicate the Nigger because an ignorant law of debtor and creditor in England precluded him for the time from asserting the liberties of the Briton. The British Parliament, as an institution representing one million of voters out of six millions of adult men, must discover that liberality and toleration should keep company with charity in domestic dulness and the British *Times*, as a propagandist, should hate the Russian and Austrian, as well as the French Emperor. As to that portion of the press in which this is written, its hands are clean, its principles are not geographical, and its notion of religious toleration is not Lord Malmesbury’s or Exeter Hall’s.

The debate on Thursday, resultless in resolution and leaving the Madiat where they were, is not unimportant, as having developed some individuality. In the first place, we may afford to admire the unequivocal success obtained by Mr Lucas as a debater. *That* fact is the best

<sup>1</sup> On Friday, 26th November 1852, a meeting had been held at Stafford House and a memorial agreed to from the women of England to the women of the United States on the subject of slavery. Mrs Ex-President Tyler published a reply (reprinted in the *Times*), telling the Duchess of Sutherland and her friends to look at home.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Lucas, M.P. for Meath. The editor of the *Tablet*. He died in 1855.

possible tribute to the genuine, manly "toleration" of the House of Commons—the highest illustration of the thorough practical freedom distinguishing the public life of England. Cardinal Wiseman getting elected to the House of Commons, and attempting to secure a hearing, would have not a more difficult game to play than Mr Lucas has had. Yet, against all the prejudices which met him on the part of the religious members for the violence of his advocacy of his creed, and on the part of the men of business for the political wrong-headedness of his general policy—against a general belief on all sides that he was a fanatic and a fool, who would merely talk fanaticism and folly, and who must consequently be summarily put down—as a Plumptre, and as a stupid Plumptre—this very Catholic, and more Irish than an Irish gentleman, gained on Thursday night a complete oratorical success, testified not merely by the hearty, chuckling cheers of the delighted "Brigade" around him, but by the encouraging silence, the sign of close attention, of the House generally—a thin House certainly, but large enough to be representative of a general tone. In the success of Mr Lucas, let the new M.P.'s see that the House of Commons never takes an out-of-door estimate of a man—always judges and decides for itself, according to its own peculiar way of judging; and, whatever its prejudices against particular sets of exceptional opinions, will give fair play and high place to all men, just in reference to their capacity to gratify and instruct it, conditional on the instruction being *àpropos* and promotive of business. Mr Lucas has spoken twice since his election; once on tenant-right, and the second time on Thursday on this Madiai question; and the result is, that he is safe of a hearing and of respectful treatment,—of a House of Commons position, in fact, for the rest of his sitting life—if he continues the same clever, tactful man he at present proves himself to be. In the first place his success is attributable to his showing the most complete mastery of subject; in the second place, to his deferential demeanour (the House *will* have Ko-too from new men)—to the courteous suppression of any offensive references



to opposing persons or parties. He endeavoured, while insisting on his argument, to please; and in the House, as in ordinary drawing-rooms, the evidence of an effort to please in itself is accepted as an accomplishment. So much comment is due to this personal success: it is a lesson to every man acting, or meaning to act, English history; it is honourable to the House of Commons. But there was a public utility, beyond the manner, in what Mr Lucas said. To defend the conduct of the persecutors of the Madiai was not possible for him, except on ecclesiastical grounds, which the House would have yelled down; and the utmost praise that can be accorded to the technical objection to the House of Commons constituting itself a court of appeal from the Tuscan Court, which had sentenced the Madiai in conformity with Tuscan law, is, that Mr Lucas was ingeniously uncandid, which is periphrasis for Jesuitical. But the rest of his speech, in dealing with the general question raised, told admirably at the time; the more from the quiet but earnest voice and gentle manner—(quiet voices and gentle manners in your big-headed, deep-chested men are irresistible in well-educated assemblies!)—and answered the speaker's purpose, in turning the line of the debate, in taking off the onus of offence from Catholicity, and transferring it to Protestant shoulders; in short, in arresting denunciation of Papal intolerance, puzzling all the bigots like Sir Robert Inglis—the Lucas of *that* side—and forcing the two crack Cabinet Ministers, Lord John and Lord Palmerston, to devote their speeches to vindicating themselves from Mr Lucas's keen syllogism. Granted that Mr Lucas did not meet the real question—that he did not prove England to be without sympathy for Roman Catholic martyrs; but what a triumph in a debate to have made himself the legitimate hero of it! Lord John, smiling softly at Mr Lucas's oratory—and it is creditable to Lord John that he never misses a chance of encouraging rising new men, and that on this occasion he called the *Tablet's* leader "very able"—was evidently as perplexed as Würmser, when young Napoleon left off defence and attacked; "the fellow" was a fool, but then



the audacity was a hit—the Würmser had at once to change his tactics, and play just the opposite game he had arranged for himself. In point of fact, Lord John, with all his vague declarations of indiscriminate liberalism, was vexed, showed his vexation in a curt, dry manner, and made a speech by no means such as the House had expected, and such as would suit the occasion, even supposing Mr Lucas had not carried war into the Exeter Hall camp. Was it not preposterous to have Lord John vindicating Whig foreign policy while Lord Palmerston was in the House, in office, sitting exactly behind the Speaker? It was as if Charles Kean were to offer the part of *Macduff* to Macready. You could not help, while you listened feeling the incongruity of the arrangement; and very likely Lord Palmerston felt it most keenly of all, though Lord John went out of his way to compliment “my noble friend” (whom he had nevertheless turned out) upon his foreign policy—in what? In speaking in favour of the Catholic Relief Bill! But Lord Palmerston would not be bottle-holder to Lord John; he would have his say, and did; and the House (then full again) roared with laughter and delight, and voted that Lucas was a clever fellow, but that Palmerston was the cleverer, and that the *Tablet* had been demolished—erased. Lord Palmerston is *so* popular with Members, and has such a knack of showing up individualities; and his clever, telling speeches, which only answer and never propose, are always received with acclamation, even by the men who know the thorough sham of Palmerstonian intervening liberalism. But on Thursday he was only answering Mr Lucas; and assuredly it *was* as ludicrous as the Viscount proved it; to represent Lord Palmerston as caring one curse about Protestantism as opposed to Catholicism. “The idea!” was the tone of the reply; and the gay, lively, easy and free, ever juvenile Whig, got precisely the laugh he had bid for from that intensely proper and Protestant House. Mr Lucas chose the wrong Whig in holding up Palmerston as the religious zealot! As his Lordship so humorously looked—but so periphrastically observed—the idea!

## CHAPTER VI<sup>1</sup>

### The Jewish Question

A COALITION Government, with an Opposition consisting of one man only, presents this advantage to the public, that it gets through business. Last night there was a wonderful amount of work got through — the army estimates, for instance, travelled through in an unprecedented couple of hours; and though all this usefulness is unexciting and leaves the morning papers less acceptable than usual, a practical public will doubtless be gratified. It is from a consciousness that the country is gratified, albeit not amused, that Mr Cayley,<sup>2</sup> oddly proffering the project from the Tory side, considers he is entitled to propose, on the understanding that Lord John Russell is to do nothing, that that noble commoner shall be well paid for his trouble. Some drolls suggest that the great question of the day is the precise question which nobody dares to put, viz., what it all means, this Foreign-Office resignation of Lord John Russell and accession of Lord Clarendon? The Government must feel oddly confident of its strength while making such changes, and not taking the trouble to tell Parliament anything about them. Lord John, perhaps indulges in some anticipation of a premiership; but Lord Aberdeen, basking in Ministerial sunshine and fair weather, is likely to prefer Belgravia to Nice—as long as he can.

But the question of the week has been that question which Mr Napier<sup>3</sup> put so pertinently in the feeble debate

<sup>1</sup> [Feb. 26, 1853.]

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for North Riding of Yorkshire.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Napier, Attorney-General, and in 1858 Lord Chancellor of Ireland under Lord Derby. He died in 1882.

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on the Jewish Disabilities. "Is Christianity to be an open question?" That is putting the matter in a strong way. Mr Napier thought that the interrogatory was an overwhelming sarcasm which the latitudinarians who dine with Lionel Rothschild would find it impossible to stand up against. Yet it is exactly the right question to face in a week devoted, with slight variation, to the consideration whether Roman Catholics and Hebrews are to be incapacitated by their creeds from becoming good citizens. Not that there is any doubt in the enlightened House of Commons, which is by no means a rigidly religious assembly, that confession and circumcision are consistent with the avoidance of transportation or the tread-mill; but that it is not yet the fashion to fling away the affectations of prejudices still cultivated by the powerful tea-table interest in this country. The English House of Commons does admit the Jews (this is the third year in which the affirmative has been voted) to Parliament, and that is very illogical in gentlemen who are *ex officio* (as English M.P.'s) Christians; and that intelligent Senate, having already endowed Maynooth, would endow the whole Irish Roman Catholic Church if political expediency could be pleaded in favour of such pecuniary extravagance. That House of Commons, made up of men of business and men of the world, would endow a Mormon College, if there were one, on good political reasons being shown, and would make a Ghebiri Prime Minister, if he had got in, and were the fittest man, just as they made Benjamin Disraeli, passionate champion of the pure Sephardim, the practical governor of the British Empire. That House of Commons was elected, and got elected, to look after the nation's and its own interests in this world, and it only begins to think about the next, as of a notice of motion, after the orders of the day are disposed of! When we see the man who is the favourite of the House—leader of the *par excellence* Protestant Church party—a man who owes his literary fame to a dashing Judaic theory, which among other things includes a compliment to Caiaphas for the crucifixion—for, asks Mr Disraeli, we should never

have been redeemed had not the Redeemer been put in a position to die for us!—it is difficult to realise the notion that the British representation is Christian in the theological sense. But what is quite certain—what no one will deny, if he leaves off generalisation, and remembers Jones's, the member for Here's, and Smith's, the member for There's, individual talk about churches and chapels—is this, that the House of Commons is perfectly representative in respect to reflecting impartially all the phases of faith of the British Empire, and that it is intensely anti-sectarian. To such threats as those of Mr Napier on Thursday night—that the vengeance of God would afflict Mr Speaker and Lord John Russell if they allowed the money-changing Rothschild to enter the temple of pure Christianity, namely, the House of Commons, which is elected by the most conspicuous national demoralisation and scoundrelism, illustrated (*see* committee-rooms) in the very lobbies through which Mr Napier walked to deliver his Jeremiad—hon. gentlemen are profoundly indifferent, and if the lollers on the back benches did arouse themselves, the clareted Jehoiakims, to think at all about the warning, delivered with that denunciatory snuffle in which Irish Orangemen excel, it was to consider whether, when the head of the Rothschilds does take his seat, Mr Napier will flee to the salubrious and irresponsible atmosphere of the Chiltern Hundreds. Is not that the test? Elijah, when nobody attended to him, went into the wilderness: but, though the House of Commons *did* twice vote for the admission of the Jews, and therefore invited that providential vindictiveness which the member for Dublin Trinity specifies, for of course a just God is not technical, and does not wait until the two Houses have agreed—we found Mr Napier snugly in office last year, and enjoying himself as heartily as a deaf statesman possibly could. In the same way, applying the same tests, the House does not even compliment Mr Spooner,<sup>1</sup> or Mr James Macgregor,<sup>2</sup> Mr Spooner's seconder in the Maynooth matter, upon fanaticism. The men of the world, who are the majority,

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for North Warwickshire.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Sandwich.

and who know that Spooner would allow Beelzebub to bank with him, and who are satisfied that the Chairman of the South Eastern Railway is one of the most rational and clever of mankind, will insist, and vote accordingly, that these hyper-perfect Protestant persons are only playing the game, and that a clumsy one, of a party which plays bigotry, having revoked on protection, as its last card. You cannot expect that Jones—who is a Protestant, because he has three church-livings in his gift, and who has dined to-day with Smith, a Roman Catholic and a Papist, because he was born one, but would, nevertheless, as soon confess to you as to Dr M'Hale—will tumble into the House after Curaçoa at eleven and vote that the teaching of Maynooth is inimical to the order of the realm. Spooner, who seems to have found out some ecclesiastical Holywell Street, where naughty Latin books are sold, may quote to him worse things than Casanova ever suggested, and the inference, as to the possible consequences on youthful and pious Irish minds, may be awful. But Jones won't believe a word of it. He has smoked with G. H. Moore for years—been attentive to the *mots* of Duffy all through the session, and he and Keogh have been together nights and nights at a stretch; he knows that these are the Pope's brass band—the crack Catholics—and he refuses to be frightened by Spooner; and when he gets Macgregor into the dining-room, he nudges him in the ribs, leers knowingly, and asks him if he knows what are Forbes Mackenzie's calculations as to the votes all this piety will bring. If the bigotry succeeds, well and good—Jones respects it; but if it fails, as it has failed this week, he laughs at it. We cannot interfere for humanity and liberty “and that sort of thing” abroad, until we have put matters straight at home, and this week you could see Jones was gradually coming to the conclusion that the Protestantism and the Christianity appealed to against the claims of Catholics and Jews, could not be very well worth giving a monopoly to, seeing that when Parliament is traced, in a committee-room, to its source, it would appear that theological anxieties but slightly influence its characteristic



vitality. So, analysing the votes of this week, it is clear, Mr Napier, that Christianity is made an open question. A few years more and we shall have some great Hindu merchant settling in London, affecting the citizens, giving good dinners, and at last getting in ; and then the question of the day will be, why should not the Juggernât interest be represented ? Why not ?

Mr Disraeli, sitting through it all on Thursday, sublimely cynical, could have suggested to Rothschild that seats are attainable to Hebrews with less pother, by doing what "Tancred" describes gentlemen doing at Jerusalem—accepting conversion to Christianity from the English bishop, and when the missionary supplies from the tea-table interest fall short, striking for wages. Mr Disraeli takes the oath on the faith of a Christian, like a sensible man, and yet writes *Coningsby* and draws Sidonia, whose ancestors defied by eluding the Spanish Inquisition. Not heroic, no doubt ; and yet the practical classes think Disraeli wiser than Rothschild ; or, at anyrate, the creator of Sidonia, and the writer of the celebrated Jew-Pontius-Pilate paragraph in the *Political Biography*, heads the party whose *mot d'ordre* is Church and State and the Protestant Constitution. Only one condition is apparently made by the party with their leader—that though he will not be with them against the Jews, he shall not be against them ; that if he votes with Lord John (should not the Tory leader talk always gently at the Whig statesman who makes Jews freemen ?) he shall not speak with Lord John. And this year, as in the year before last, Disraeli fulfils the pact—by giving his vote for his race (as to their creed, he is as devoted to it as—no matter what other statesman—to the details of the Christian dispensation) but giving it a silent vote ; sitting among his party and enduring in sullen tameness all the insults which red-faced and respectable saints like Inglis, and moustached *muscadins* like Sir Robert Peel, poured down on Thursday, on the Caucasian aristocracy of humanity. From Disraeli's side rose Napier—who had served under Disraeli—to give notice about God's vengeance. At Disraeli's side stood



Inglis, who had followed Disraeli into every lobby for six years, when that high-minded man was proving from Holy Writ that a Jew in Parliament would carry destruction to the British Constitution—although he did not make it apparent that Holy Writ was dedicated to the proposers of Magna Charta. Over Disraeli's head thundered the impetuous Sir Robert Peel—than whom no man has a better right to think ill of the Jews, since who has suffered more from them?—when that ingenious youth (having ascertained that his brother was booked to vote for Rothschild) demonstrated, without mentioning that Lola Montes<sup>1</sup> was his authority, that the Jews were the enemies of freedom (is not Mr Sloman, of Chancery Lane, a Jew?) and that the house of the Rothschilds constituted the principal support of the despotic Emperors of Austria, France and Russia. It might have been remembered by the fiery Sir Robert that the Cabinet of Disraeli, per Malmesbury, was the firm, not to say the affectionate, ally of those potentates; and that the unfilial owner of Tamworth, who never saw so much in his father as other people did, and who, for his part, thinks Disraeli a “doosed good” fellow, &c., &c., was an inveterate supporter of that Cabinet. Mr Disraeli may have detected the perverse logic—Mr Disraeli saw and felt all the absurdities of his own situation, and of his friends' argumentation—for it was not difficult to perceive by the changeful shrinking and smiling of his demeanour that he was not a very proud or a peculiarly happy man on this occasion, when he was sitting as the frightful example of an Inglis's preaching. But Mr Disraeli threw the heroism and the work and the honour on Lord John Russell; and perhaps he assisted Lord John thus far, that he manœuvred his friend Mr Walpole—leader *pro hac vice*—into keeping quiet, into suppressing all the respectable elocutionists of the party—therefore in leaving the opposition to a Sibthorp (who—the dirtiest old man in Christendom—objected that Hebrews don't wash) and to an Inglis, in short, to the traditional obstructives of the Conservative classes, and accordingly in

<sup>1</sup> A notorious adventuress of the time.

making the whole fuss ludicrous. After all there was as much avoidance of oratory on the other side. Lord John was eminently and curtly dull; and it is a consequence of a Government of "all the talents" that debating, which cannot be all on one side, must be tepid.

## CHAPTER VII

Select Committees—Cardwell—Gladstone's indiscretion—Irish  
Education—Bernal Osborne—Henry Drummond

*March 12.*

WHEN the present Government was formed, a pleasant evening paper, bidding for the resumption of quasi-Whig Ministerialism, set about discovering a justification for the excess of strength in the Cabinet; and it was ascertained that the only way in which the soup could escape destruction from so over-manned a cuisine was by a general understanding being come to that there should be no concert—that each Minister should go to work separately, and that, accordingly, the departments being well looked after, the Ministry should take care of itself. The advice was practical in its application to a coalition not very sure of its basis; and clearly it has been taken. It is true there is a Cabinet Council every Saturday: but these are all about Montenegro and Milan—domestic policy stays at home, in the departmental bureaux. Thus, we see intensive individual activity among the Ministers—collectively, profound idleness. The Ministry, as a whole, is doing nothing—is still representative of nothing—is avoiding all grappling with difficulties, arrangement of which would give fame to the Aberdeen Cabinet—which, to Lord John's chagrin, will doubtless be the historical title. But take the Government to pieces, and you will be astonished and delighted at the bustle going on in every separate sphere. Deduct last night from the week when the Tory Opposition had the *pas*, and you will find a Minister the hero of the orders of each night—coming out to fight singly and in

rotation. It is the only plan with "all the talents"; the worst of managers shirk a constellation of *all* the stars, simply from fear of the consequences. And the public, finding the Parliamentary proceedings dull, conclude that they are useful. It is indeed a session of work; but may we never have such another; for Parliament is our principal public amusement.

Do any of those people who pat their morning paper applaudingly and say, "Ah, the House is really at it now," consider how the members suffer? Take Mr Vernon Smith's<sup>1</sup> objection this week to the proposal of a committee on "oaths," that there was no use appointing any more committees since there were no members disengaged; and, as illustrating the same fact, Mr Ewart's notice of motion for a Select Committee to inquire whether "the constitution and action of the Select Committees of this House might not be improved by generally diminishing the number of members composing such committees, and by making provision for their giving more undivided attention to subjects submitted to their consideration than they are able to do under the present system." Certainly we find twenty Irish members dividing on Thursday night in favour of the addition of more members to the India Committee; but you may set that down to fiery zeal—or the consideration that those who thus divided knew that they would not be called upon to sit, notwithstanding Mr Maguire's<sup>2</sup> suggestion that a Papist would have more sympathy than a Protestant with a Hindoo. It is not necessary, however, to trust to indirect evidences; go into the committee lobby between twelve and four; study the "groups," and you will appreciate what the honour of a seat means in 1853. It means six hours of private business, which is not your own; and eight more hours of public business, which is your constituents'. After such a routine it is not pleasant to have the fact blurted out, as

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Northampton. He filled various offices, and was created Lord Lyveden in 1859. He died in 1873.

<sup>2</sup> John Francis Maguire, M.P. for Dungarvan, a distinguished Irish politician. He died in 1872.

## 100 ST STEPHEN'S IN THE FIFTIES

it was by rash Mr Whalley<sup>1</sup> this week to the indignant amazement of Mr Brotherton, that the private business of the House of Commons is "disgracefully and inefficiently conducted." Mr Brotherton repelled the charge; how could the youngest member (Mr Whalley was elected since the general election) know anything about the matter? "I told him," said Mr Hume—Mr Hume, the "inveterate reformer," should know. Mr Hume is as indiscreet with his own nest as ungenerous with the nests of others; and so there it stands on record for general study—a confession in the House that the House does not know how to conduct private business; conduct of public business being, of course, an open question of some date. Seeing what is going on—the crowds of committees, the time they take, the dissatisfaction they give, the frightful expense they cause—it is impossible not to suspect that Mr Hume is accidentally right. After all, therefore, when—the House being up after a closing heavy division—one sees a jaded M.P. fainting at the cloak-room, into his paletot, and with hardly strength enough left—he has been "at it" since 10 A.M.—to light his cigar; when one follows his shaky steps to the cabstand, and observes that his direction is home, and not to a ball—even the young M.P.'s now, Mr Whalley included, avoid suppers at Evans' and coffee in the Haymarket—the pity is shared by some slight contempt, such as is felt for workmen who bungle with their tools. A thousand miles in a thousand hours is clever, in the way of a wager; but we cannot respect the energy which insists on going over two sides of a triangle when one would bring to the end. Mr Ewart's plan of providing for an increase of subjects by decreasing the numbers on the committees would not do for this reason: the surface spread might one day become so thin that we should have committees of units. Let a practical nation consider what would become of us if a Parliamentary quorum should be one—and that quorum, say Sibthorp. How he would report.

<sup>1</sup> G. H. Whalley, M.P. for Peterborough. He was unseated in 1853, but regained the seat in 1859, and held it until his death in 1878. He was an ardent Protestant, and also a supporter of the Tichborne claimant.

Government, meanwhile, is winning good opinion by single combats. Mr Cardwell, on Monday, made friends of the shipping interest by adroit concessions, suggested to him by his old constituents;<sup>1</sup> and his saying, while he spoke, that he was frightfully dry, was the proof that he was making an oratorical hit. Mr Cardwell has got on in the world by being dull; and would sink at once if he were momentarily guilty of a spark of cleverness—supposing he could get it up. He is of that class of men who cannot understand what people seem to admire in Mr Disraeli; who mumble “charlatan” when they hear of anybody being brilliant, and who console themselves for never being admired, though so immensely respected, by the consciousness that they were never late for an appointment—hoping that posterity, knowing that, may be induced to invite them down. He was Peel’s pet, and is to be studied as the exemplar of the class Sir Robert encouraged and educated for the government of England. A great master is known by his pupils in a great degree, and it is Sir Robert Peel’s condemnation that he left us no public men to lead. You may think of Gladstone, but Gladstone only succeeds to Peel’s place—he is not a descendant. Sir Robert Peel, as he grew in statesmanship, marked a transition era, from the Pitts, and Sheridans, and Cannings, to the “business members,” the product of the reformed House; and he has left us with the red tape tone intensified into our public life. What could a “man of business”—his great boast—leave us, as his representatives, but clerks? From his son, Mr Frederick Peel, to Mr Cardwell, those whom he led up to the Treasury, have been clerks, and only clerks. It is odd, but Sir Robert Peel never picked up a great man. He hated the brilliant man, even snubbed Mr Disraeli, and found in the end reason to repent *that* oversight. But perhaps he knew his age—the sort of men who would suit—and, clearly, dull and decorous, soulless, but accurate and laborious, Mr Cardwell has fame and position as an administrator, statesmen having gone for the moment out of fashion. So, to repeat, his very

<sup>1</sup> [The electors of Liverpool.]



dissertation on ships on Monday did himself and the Government good service. The shipowners said next morning, "Practical man, Cardwell, sir;" and the Trinity House said the Government was more rational than that remarkable corporation expected or had reason to expect. In the same way Mr James Wilson, who is usually lucratively quiet in office, gave immense satisfaction in the city by his careful arguments against new Assurance Companies. It was a good point to make, at the right time, speculation having turned in a different direction; and if he get out a good report he will ever after be regarded by the big offices about the Mansion House as a great statesman, which would be a mistake, for he is only a great clerk, being to the statesman what the actuary is to the political economist.

Let it not, however, be concluded that the Government is only financial and statistical. Colonel Mure (a wonderful scholar, who cannot talk as well as—say Joseph Hume—wherefore, though an old member, he is nearly a stranger) is evidently acting for Lord John Russell in the matter of the National Gallery; so that the Cabinet is looking after its *didicisse fideliter* properly, perhaps because Mr Disraeli started so boldly in the same direction when he had the official chance; while on the other hand Mr Fitzroy,<sup>1</sup> cleverly backed by Mr Phinn<sup>2</sup>—who is an immense success among the new members, principally because he talks in the House without a trace of the Hall—is positively chivalric, on behalf of his colleagues, in his attempt to check the characteristic brutality of British husbands upon their wives. The introduction of such a bill as his is the more commendable that it is gratuitous, there being no feminine pressure from without, asking Government to give themselves supererogatory work; and as he proves himself "quite a lady's man," it would not be astonishing if an organisation of back parlours were got

<sup>1</sup> Henry Fitzroy, M.P. for Lewes, and Under Secretary for the Home Department in the Aberdeen Ministry. He afterwards filled other offices, and died in 1859.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Phinn, M.P. for Bath, and Q.C.

up to induce him to resist callous Lord Campbell's Divorce Commission recommendations, the injustice done to women in these recommendations being obvious, as any peeress "in her own right" would easily show.

But it is out of the question to enumerate all that the Government is doing—departmentally. Every man of them is busy, and busy independently, for it is obvious Lord Clarendon is the only Minister troubled with the advice of colleagues. Mr Gladstone, everyone sees, is acting quite independently—oblivious of the "leader" next him; and, as on Thursday night, sometimes forgetting himself. That was the second time he had done damage to the Government—a serious evil, beyond the temporary reasons, as encouraging the clerks to look down on the brilliant men. In fact, it was clerk Cardwell, on Thursday week, who saved the Government from the results of a speech of the brilliant Gladstone; and because there was no clerk at hand this last time, the brilliant man led a host into a minority lobby. There can be very little question that but for the running away—a harsh phrase of dignified and responsible representatives, but a sad fact—on the 3rd,<sup>1</sup> Mr Disraeli would have beaten the Government, and that on a free-trade motion; and assuredly it is a great impeachment of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's "discretion" that he risked such a confusion as was seen in next day's division list—Disraeli, with Radicals like Walmsley, voting in favour of free trade against a free-trade Government—the Government list including Charles Villiers—Charles Villiers actually voting against free trade! In one respect the division list was useful to constituencies; it told who are the men—healthy Radicals some of them are supposed to be—who will stand by the present Ministry at all hazards, whatever their no measures or their Budget, merely because they are the present Ministry. But Mr Gladstone had no such purpose in view, and therefore did a silly thing in his haughty opposition to friendly Mr Hume, who would have been very glad at an excuse to drop his dangerous motion.

<sup>1</sup> [On a question about the free importation of butter, cheese, &c.]

But he did something more than a silly thing in opposing Lord Robert Grosvenor,<sup>1</sup> on Thursday, when that utilitarian nobleman held in his hand a power of attorney to get a majority on the attorney certificate question. Opposition to the motion was a matter of course, but his hasty hauteur played the deuce. This time there was no temptation to the friends of Government to run away—it was not disgraceful to be in the opposite lobby; no Disraeli was trying to trap them: and they took the advantage of the nonchalant defiance of the most potent of professions, to oblige their solicitors, and to return their returns. Consequence—Mr Gladstone was put in a foolish, the Government in an ignominious, position. They got Mr Hume into their lobby—Mr Hume was, of course (poor blundering old gentleman), anxious to make up for his doings that night week—but they had driven people they could not spare into opposition, and provided a division list full of curiosities—for instance, Mr James Sadleir, brother to Mr John Sadleir, a Lord of the Treasury, but also a solicitor, voted against them!—which will seriously hamper them, if they still venture to leave the certificates untouched in the Budget. This couple of disasters, their first, provoke injurious doubts about the financial preparations promised to be completed early after Easter; and it is desirable that on the question of the Budget, at least, the departments should meet together for some sort of corporate conclusions. Evidently, Mr Gladstone is not cautious enough, without a clerk or two to check him. His Pegasus is not quite trained to the jog-trot yet.

This week's division list will show that "Christianity" was again an "open question:" Lord John, in *his* department—viz. to look after civil and religious liberty—acting like the rest, with perfect independence, if not of those of the Ministers who are in the Commons, certainly of more than one of them in the Lords, and assuredly undertaking to strike off the last fetter, &c., &c., without being very

<sup>1</sup> Lord R. Grosvenor, M.P. for Middlesex. Was created Lord Ebury in 1857. He died in 1893. He was a strong Protestant and an advanced Whig.

sure of the aid of the file—not to mention the rank of “ordinary supporters.” This division is the test of our “progress;” and yet, after all, it appears, in this new Parliament which is starting the latter half of the nineteenth century, the head of the department of civil and religious liberty could only get a majority of 51, which is discreditably small to the Commons, and not large enough to effect the desired intimidation of the Lords. The episodical signs of progress, however, are more gratifying than the main indications furnished by Mr Hayter (who whipped his best last night, and he is the greatest whipper-in that ever lived). It was very grand to hear Lord John, with his head and coat tails thrown back in that dignified attitude which is inseparably associated with representative institutions, asking Sir Frederick Thesiger<sup>1</sup> and the Tories whether they were justified in feeling indignant with the persecutors of the Madias, while they themselves were proscribing the Jews? This is a point which suggests great mental progress in Lord John; and it is fair to say the hint told tremendously on a well-dined House. If men and Ministers would take to that sort of argument oftener, we should have less cant stopping the way. For instance, how easily that weary debate in the Lords on Monday, upon Lord Clancarty’s argument against the Irish national system of education, could have been stopped, if Lord Aberdeen had had the courage to put the point—“Why, my lords, for heaven’s sake don’t intercept our denunciations of the M’Hales,<sup>2</sup> who denounce the Godless colleges.” But your grave statesmen can’t often venture on the *tu quoque* with its full effect; and there are the dull dogs who can venture, but who cannot appreciate—as Vincent Scully,<sup>3</sup> who closed the debate, and who yet missed the perception, that when the Roman Catholic members are

<sup>1</sup> The first Lord Chelmsford. He was Attorney-General under Lord Derby. He was twice Lord Chancellor, and died in 1878.

<sup>2</sup> John M’Hale, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. He was called by O’Connell the lion of St Jarlath’s, the name of Tuam Cathedral. He died in 1881.

<sup>3</sup> Vincent Scully, M.P. for Cork, and Q.C. He retired in 1865, and died in 1871.

ranged in a body in favour of the admission of the Jews to Parliament against the *par excellence* Protestant party ranged against that special phase of religious liberty, it cannot be quite true, as enthusiastic abhorrrers of the Pope too systematically assume, that a Papist is necessarily less tolerant than a Protestant. As Lionel Rothschild would say—*our* Madias are in "Sequin Court."

Perhaps the pleasantest fact about last night's debate is that it was so fearfully dull. The intolerants were so conscious of the sham they were getting through, that they mumbled their bigotry in the humblest of keys; and the debaters on the other side felt so sensibly their zeal was a formality, that no efforts enabled them to be interesting. The world had made up its mind about the whole matter—the division was foreknown to a name—and the simulation of eagerness, of intolerance on one side and virtuous indignation on the other, could not be got up. Sir F. Thesiger (for one reason, because about the most Jewish looking gentleman within the bar) was hardly the man to lead a supremely Christian question, for there is a popular prejudice fatal to the New Testament pretensions of barristers in good practice; and some such thought may have been busy in Mr Disraeli's head. It was curious to notice that the moment Sir Frederick rose to move his amendment, Mr Disraeli took his hat from under his seat, pulled down his vest, and—walked home. The vindicator of Caiaphas need not have spoken—need not have voted—for has he not written enough? But should he not have listened, at least, to his own Attorney-General, proving that the presence of a Hebrew in the Commons would be an impertinence to Providence? Far bolder was Mr Osborne, who took this opportunity of emerging from the taciturnity which office has imposed on him, to make a speech, the least merit of which is, that it demonstrated Sir Frederick's history to be as bad as Mr Pinnock's. It was a very good speech, considering that there was nothing to be said, and that the orator spoke merely in order that it should not be remarked of him next day, as of Mr Disraeli, that he had been silent. But even



under these circumstances it would have been better if it had been spoken on some other bench than that directly behind the leader of the House. When a good debater gets into office, and that a subordinate one, he at once becomes accountable to his chiefs in the Cabinet; and ease under "responsibility" does not come all at once—though really Sir William Molesworth must be excepted, who last week on the Canada Clergy Reserves made a better speech—it was dashing, personal, vivid—than he ever made out of the office he has at last been caught in. People said of Mr Osborne last night, however, that it was "Osborne with the chill *on*,"—an Indian in continuations for the first time, using his tomahawk *selon les convenances*—decidedly afraid to "strike," and carefully avoiding that friendly and familiar "a laugh" (a reporter's definition of universal merriment) which was waiting on him—which came to attend him from the library—even from the most westerly club—and which he yet did not dare to evoke. However, it is an age of business, and we must consent to have our wits bought up: and, failing Osborne last night, the humour took refuge in Henry Drummond; and he rewarded them by giving his incidental opinion—observe that he was taking the solemn Christian ground against the bill—that Cain was the first Dissenter. The *mot*, like most of Mr Drummond's, was about the lobbies and the clubs in an hour: and people said "How good!" and the same people went in to vote reverently against Lionel Rothschild making the acquaintance of Mr Speaker, "Damme, sir, what would become of the lower orders, sir, without religion?"



## CHAPTER VIII

Mr Spooner—Electoral Corruption—Canada Clergy Reserves—  
John Bright—Edward Miall

*March 19.*

IT is not the first-placed people who are Premiers and leaders, or there would be frequent national scrapes and bizarreries. The French fashions will *not* be ruled by the French Empress, and the English nation may, in the same way, be permitted to refuse to identify itself with the English Parliament in regard to such moral matters as the Petition Committees are just at present adjudicating upon. Eugénie has too long a waist, which justified sartorial revolt; and the House of Commons has too expansive a conscience,—and, though we accept their measures, we must decline their morality. At least, it is to be hoped that the respectable classes, when they meet or write to members, are making such mental reservations as amount to a belief that the existing House of Commons, as it turns its silver, or sometimes golden lining in the committee lobbies, is not, at all events, representative of the average honour, honesty, purity and independence of the remarkably enlightened British people. The unenfranchised certainly are entitled to rejoice that the 1,000,000 men who have votes are exceptional persons, and that England is not to be held responsible ('twould be so awkward after our eternal contrasts of ourselves with other nations) for the figure of Cloacina being substituted for that of Liberty in those market-places where hustings are most erected. For the talk on the matter, more particularly among the "people's party," is of the most unreserved description; and there is an indignant eagerness, because so many members are

being unseated and so much corruption eliminated, to take for granted that the rottenness is universal, and that the whole imperial constituency is given to drink and imbecility in the rumpling presence of promises of £5 to the hand of Matthew Marshall. Whether so comprehensive a deduction from the proceedings of the committees, even as illustrated in Mr Cobden's way, by reference to Dod,—and by recalling such a correspondence as that of the Marquis of Londonderry<sup>1</sup> about his treasure in the County Down—is not somewhat unsound, may be a question; but how the gentlemen and the journals who believe all this of their race and land can find it in their faces to give themselves airs—for instance, in the criticism on Franklin Pierce's<sup>2</sup> grand appeal to the States, and can go on smirking in the jog-trot faith that we are heading civilisation, and that the French are contemptible, may be allowed to bewilder the brains of persons who have a weakness for facing all sorts of facts, and first of all those under our noses, such as in the committee rooms Cloacæ. How, indeed, in such circumstances Mr Spooner can think it worth while to devote himself to stopping the way of the people to Sydenham on Sundays, instead of arranging for a rush to Australia out of the way of the sulphuric visitation which lesser crimes called upon as good cities as London, is a question which only those are capable of answering who can appreciate the psychological phenomenon evidenced in men insisting on sanding sugar before calling to prayers, and remaining innocent of any consciousness of inconsistency. You see Mr Spooner, who is a thorough man of business, of keen brains, and great tact, sitting in his committee-room, Group O, and getting from witnesses evidence which only the agent behind knows to be perjury, but which the impressionable Birmingham banker is convinced does demonstrate that the smaller shopkeeper and disengaged "freeman" class in Great Britain are rogues; and you would think that a knowledge

<sup>1</sup> Third Marquis. He died in 1852.

<sup>2</sup> Franklin Pierce, the new American President. He had been inaugurated on 4th March.

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of that fact would have some effect on Mr Spooner's views of public life. But no; you watch him pass jauntily along the lobbies, looking good-naturedly and happily at all mankind in his way; and when you get into the gallery you are just in time to see a yellow-faced little man rising, who, you subsequently find, is this very same chairman of Group O, expostulating with the Senate upon their indecent tendency to allow the Briton that never shall be a slave to go to Norwood on a particular day called Sunday; or still more vehemently entreating the patrons of Mr Coppock<sup>1</sup> at present, the Government, not to unchristianise the Legislature and the age by admitting inside the bar (he is always outside—so it's a question of three feet) a large-nosed, fat-eyed, unenergetic man, who is a Hebrew, but who also has the best French, and therefore Christian cook in London. When you read or hear such confessions about the voting classes in England as were made in the course of the Bridgenorth and Blackburne debates on Tuesday, you would expect, as a matter of course, to have a resolution in favour of national mourning, or national prayers, or of the Speaker taking to sackcloth and ashes, of stopping all legislation and all action until something is done to purify the land; something which should be to the immorality of the nation what the great London Tunnel sewers will be to the filth of London—very deep draining—so as to clear away out to the Pacific that electoral sediment, from the bribed to the briber—the Brown and the Coppock—in which so many English gentlemen who despise the French nation have soiled their fingers. You would think—to continue your wonderment—that there would be no more talk of a new Reform Bill, but rather that there would be a universal demand for a return of the era before 1832 when there were pocket boroughs indeed, but which may be said to be to the Canterburys (moral Canterbury, which ruined G. S. Smythe because he fought a duel!) and the Norwiches, what a monopolised *lorette* is to a wholly lost

<sup>1</sup> James Coppock, the well-known Liberal electioneering agent. He died in 1857.

and unhappy woman. You would think Lord John would go on his knees and ask pardon of Sir Robert Inglis and Mr Herries<sup>1</sup>—old Reform Bill opponents—for having led the nation into such disgrace. You would think Sir William Molesworth would recant faith in humanity, and that Mr Roebuck would rise from his sick-bed to urge on the Senate the expediency of a monocracy, and such a *coup d'état* as would make the Earl of Cardigan<sup>2</sup> first minister with Prince Albert at the Mint. You would think anything but what is done—much weeping at the frailty of an enlightened nation, but grant of the new writ nevertheless—and the orders of the day. You hope it is all right; only you are glad Lord Brougham had the courage to present that petition to the Peers from Robert Owen;<sup>3</sup> and you are sure that as the committees prove the established system to be a dead failure, Robert Owen's might be worth the trial. This you are satisfied about, that while Coppock is so heartily greeted in the lobby, Mr Spooner's mind may be more easy about the admission of one not astute Jew among 654 New Testament devotees.

But, however determined not to act in these corruption matters, consistently with words and facts—however weakly shirking the laying down of broad principles, legislation according to which would be *the* Reform Bill, by revolutionising the whole electoral system—it is still evident that the shadows of the committees are over the House, that there is sorrow and regret, and that if Lord John had the boldness and the honour to become worthy of the occasion, he would carry all before him. It would not do for the irresponsible but the conscientious to propose a resolution, such as is wanted, such as the people (that *is* pure and honest) would rejoice at; and, accord-

<sup>1</sup> John Charles Herries, President of the Board of Control under Lord Derby. He retired from Parliament in 1853, and died in 1855. He had a great knowledge of finance, and had previously filled various offices.

<sup>2</sup> The Earl of Cardigan, well known in connection with regimental quarrels for his duel with Captain Harvey Tuckett, and for the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava. He died in 1868.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Owen, the well-known Socialist. He died in 1858.

ingly, the orders of the day are read, and the thoughtless and the careless, and the cynical are allowed to carry on "business"—which *must* be attended to whatever the disgust of Providence at national sin. Hence a weary night of an Irish debate (an Irish row, as Lord Claredon said, in honour of St Patrick's Day), which was on a question whether Celtic savages or Saxon ruffians were most in the wrong in a reciprocal massacre; about which no one, out of the miserable circle of Irish partisan barristers, with Four Courts' powers of misleading and mispronunciation, could possibly care one curse; but which, in the subdued tone that has come over the conscious House, was permitted patiently to whirl and worry through a long night; the only result being a demonstration that the Irish bar, of whom the best specimens oratorised on Thursday, is a confederation not more intellectual, and less grammatical, than the greasy class who sustain the fame of British mind and eloquence under the influence of turpentine and water, at the Temple Forum, Fleet Street. Hence, too, the very complex debate on exhausted topics, treated by used-up speakers, last night; and you could detect in the languor of the talking and still more in the languor of the hearing—a climax of that desultory weariness and want of earnestness about everything which set in with the committees—profound gratification that after the division there was to come the Easter holidays—a respite from Spooner, Pakington, and the striking of new committees, and virtuous Chairmen appearing at the bar with a "Tekel Upharsin," to be put on the journals, for the benefit of sitting and perspiring members. For very many years, since I took to a taste for studying contemporary history, as it is manufactured in Westminster, I have always been in the habit of asking why there were holidays at Easter; and nobody could ever satisfy me that the custom had a justification. To eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, or plum-pudding on the 25th of December because you always did so, and your fathers before you, is to make yourself ill with good and sound reasons; but if Parliament has no better reason for



adjourning for a week the Friday but one before Easter Sunday, than that Parliament never did otherwise since Parliament was,—agents, solicitors, municipal corporations, cabmen, Bridge Street hotel-keepers, the news agents and the people who have given up theatres and taken to the debates are entitled to remonstrate. That is to say, they usually are; but not this year. This Easter holiday is a needed breathing-time after the dredging work we have had since the 2nd February. Human nature could not have gone on with new committees without a pause.

In the confusion, the shame, the repentance, no one has been able to make up his mind as to what should be done; and a pause may permit some good resolutions. Great blame is thrown on Sir J. Shelley<sup>1</sup> for his indecision on Tuesday about the new writs—proposing and then withdrawing a preclutory amendment. But why censure that good-natured, not large-minded, and anxious-to-be-busy baronet, who was only puzzled, as the House was puzzled, between conscience and expediency—who was in doubt, because he could not feel his way in a House in doubt? It is absurd to appoint a commission here, and to renew the writ there,—to lament bribery and yet not punish the corrupt—to declaim against Brown and Coppock and yet leave Brown and Coppock to make their fortunes: and the House of Commons is behaving very foolishly, and recklessly, and irregularly. But whose business is it to be wise and bold in such a crisis? No one's, if not Lord John's; and Lord John is mild and unconcerned; and begs to tell Lord A. Vane<sup>2</sup> (that the son of the owner of the "treasure" should affect such inquiring virtue!) that he contemplates, in regard to proved cases of bribery, why—ah,—I believe,—ah,—nothing. Lord Aberdeen, in the Lords, says, the day before, that he has reason to believe his noble friend is thinking over the matter; and that—ah,—no doubt,—as—ah, the noble lord opposite observes, it is,—ah,—undoubtedly shocking. Were Mr Roebuck strong and well, we should have some pluck and vigour: the little man would force that House,

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Westminster.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Durham City.



as he did in the Committee cases of the election of '41, into honest and straightforward dealing at whatever risks. But he is ill—away; and there is no other man who has such integrity and such ill-temper—the great qualities pre-eminently required. We could, therefore, only expect—whatever we may anticipate from a Cabinet Council in the short recess—the maundering and variant doings of the week—and, worse still, the dangerous speeches in which Radicals have admitted much too much. We heard from Mr Cobden and Mr Duncombe on Tuesday two astonishingly novel arguments, for “people’s party” men, for the Ballot and Equal Electoral Districts. Adopt the Ballot, says one Radical, and then there will be no bribery—the purchaser would not be safe of his bargain. Says Mr Duncombe, who deals with his own constitution as he would with the British—he is perpetually reforming it—so that now at the alleged age of 100 he looks as lively as he did when he first spited the aristocracy by turning people’s evidence against them—says the member for Finsbury—Let us have constituencies in which there shall not be less than 20,000 voters, and then who’ll be able to afford corruption? What faith in an enlightened nation does this show! According to the people’s advocates, the people are so inherently corrupt that they cannot be trusted; and yet Mr Cobden consents to, and Mr Duncombe insists on, a cry for an extension of the suffrage. Argument: the few to whom we give the suffrage are such scamps that we must multiply them: we cannot prevent the people being bribable—let us make the people too dear. Is not that *naïve* in a Liberal? This is the way to encourage and sustain Lord John in next year’s problematical Reform Bill—as if Mr Disraeli, who retains some individuality, though deposed from formal leadership in favour of Pakington, were not warily watching all these hysterical “asides,” hardly intended for the public, and arranging the capital he will make of them in proper time; when, a policy having been discovered, there will be demand for a man, to be again elected to tinkle the bells on the road to the Treasury

benches. There is, of course, one aspect in which the committee revelations are to be regarded as favourable to argumentation for more voters in Great Britain ; but, very singularly, the Radicals, as a party, are completely negligent of the materials far too abundantly presented. Those who are talking at all about the committees are canting in the wrong key : the mass of Liberals are not talking of them at all.

If we want to ascertain how the dependence on the side of Lord Aberdeen, and dread (of Lord Aberdeen) on the side of Lord John Russell, is likely to operate on the Reform Bill when it does come, and on the general character of this year's indiscriminate legislation, we can refer to last night's work in the House of Commons on the Canada clergy reserves. Lord John, who had got and taken much credit for his boldness in this business, and who had not intrepidly obstinate Lord Grey<sup>1</sup> at his elbow to make him ashamed of wavering, seems to have found at the last moment that the Argyll<sup>2</sup> and Newcastle section of the Cabinet did not like this complete desertion of the Church of England in Canada, that Lord Derby was strong on this point, and that, in such a matter, it was hardly worth while to expose Government weakness in the Lords ; and in throwing over in committee last night the third clause which excused the people of England from becoming paymasters of Canadian bishops, in the event of those right reverend persons being pauperised by the local legislature, the Government literally turned round on their own bill, took out its sting—the new principle of colonial policy—and confessed a blunder in its introduction. Now a Government, however strong, cannot afford such blunders ; the debate, consequently, did great harm to the Cabinet ; and if Mr Disraeli had not withdrawn his delaying motion to report progress, for which all the Conservatives and all the Dissenters and most of the Radicals would have voted,

<sup>1</sup> Colonial Secretary under Lord John Russell. He did not hold office after 1852, but was the critic of both parties until his death in 1894.

<sup>2</sup> Duke of Argyll. Filled various offices. He separated from Gladstone in his later years. He died in 1900.

the Cabinet would have been placed in a minority. Mr Disraeli, not sure of a concrete party to back him, may have been afraid of being called factious, or that the Government would resign, and leave *him* to be "sent for," ignominiously to be not at home to the royal messenger;—what his object was in backing out of a chance of mischief, it is not easy to say;—but clearly Government had a narrow escape. Two facts remain:—there *is* a very strong Church party in the Ministry; and Lord John gives way to it. Perhaps one satisfactory personal inference from this toilsome debate is—that Mr Edward Miall<sup>1</sup> may still succeed in the House of Commons. The Dissenters, it is known, had made during the week great efforts to arouse vexation against Lord John's compromising cunning; and Mr Miall was therefore last night in his proper position—representative of the Dissenters,—what may be called without offence, the professional Dissenters; and attacking, not an abstract point (as in his failure on the Maynooth motion), but a tangible grievance. He availed himself of the advantage of a *locus standi*, and improved in his manner—at least, in his confidence; and though exhibiting again that class manner—something of the chapel, something of the school, purr in gesture, sfogàto in voice—which offends in the House, because so obviously irreconcilable with the climate—he was still clear, terse and *instructive*—he did not lecture this time, but suggested, and he was listened to, if coldly and quietly, at least with that amount of respect which consists in the absence of fidgety sneering. There were half-a-dozen friends and admirers—who is not a friend to, and admirer of, Mr Miall?—above and below his bench, and they "Hear, heard" the diffident journalist with a generosity—Mr Bright's barytone was pre-eminent—which made you like the voices. But Mr Miall has not succeeded yet; and if he was anxious when he sat down to know why there had been no general applause, he could not fail to have discerned the reason

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Rochdale. He founded the *Nonconformist* and aided in establishing the Liberation Society. He was a strong advocate of Disestablishment. He died in 1881.

when Mr Bright got up (he spared ten minutes from India, such was the dissenting pressure on him in the lobby) and said precisely what Mr Miall had said, only in less elegant and careful language, added no new idea, and was yet loudly cheered—the whole House being eager and attentive to his every syllable. But why? Because Mr Bright has a great, massive head and deep chest, while Mr Miall is a slender, slight-necked, small, round-headed man — all intellect—but not built for action. In other words, vigour and vehemence—strong manifest volition—are necessary to impress spoken thought on an independent assembly; particularly in the case of men who study, as Mr Bright is beginning to study, the taste and tone of his audience.

## CHAPTER IX

Admiralty Scandals—Vernon Smith—Labouchere—Education—  
Mr Phinn—Plan for Debt Reduction

*April 9.*

WHEN, on Thursday afternoon, on my way to my favourite public amusement I was walking in the spring sun through the St James's Park, and heard the small guns about there firing away in great rejoicing in honour of the happy event in the adjoining Palace,<sup>1</sup> where, in consequence of all that firing, a new and limited pair of lungs must have been at that moment getting into rapid play, I was mentally summing up, for historical purposes, what in Parliament had been the business of the week so far, and what it was likely to be. I remembered, in the first place, that Lord John Russell, volunteer pilot to weather the calm, had on Monday placed before the country an elaborate statement of the gross ignorance, chaotic in assize intelligence of the masses of the people, and the consequent necessity of a large measure of education. I remembered, in the second place, that the greater portion of the evening of Tuesday had been occupied in discussions upon the admitted corruption of the British electoral body, and the consequent perplexity Parliament will be placed in when, having declared every seat void, its only alternative is either to issue an "as you were," in the shape of new writs, or, by consenting to commissions, to prepare for an inevitable measure of universal disfranchisement. I remembered, in the third place, that the Wednesday sitting of the House of Commons had been monopolised by a discussion of the best legislative means of checking the in-

<sup>1</sup> [The birth of a prince.]



creasing British custom of brutally beating wives. I remembered, in the fourth place, the notice Sir Benjamin Hall<sup>1</sup> had given of his intention to introduce a discussion which, in effect, was to decide whether the last of the Percies,<sup>2</sup> recently First Lord of the Admiralty, had or had not sold "the service" for political purposes, and further, whether his friend and secretary,<sup>3</sup> also one of the English chivalric classes, had not, in regard to the transaction, wilfully told the inquiring Senate a—falsehood. Lastly, I called to mind that the House of Lords that same evening was to agitate the question of Indian Government, and to inquire whether it was true that the capitalist classes really do, as alleged, vend the interests of 150,000,000 of conquered and plundered people for the greater or less interest on the invested principal for the buying of that humanity. Musing on all this, and coming to the conclusion that, judging of this enlightened country by the "votes" papers, it must be in rather a rotten condition, I arrived at the Strangers' Gallery, and got into the hum of a crowded House, which had just finished private business, had presented its petitions, and was awaiting the what next of that most interesting hour for announcements—half-past four. Sad and solemn myself, I expected, perhaps unreasonably, some sack-cloth-and-ashes expressions for the national sins in that august assembly; at least it was natural to think that the tone of the week would be in the proceedings. But the hum was a complacent hum;

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Marylebone. He was appointed Chief Commissioner of Works in 1855. He brought in a Bill by which the Metropolitan Board of Works was first established. He was created Lord Llanover in 1859, and died in 1867.

<sup>2</sup> Fourth Duke of Northumberland. He died in 1865.

<sup>3</sup> Augustus Stafford, M.P. for North Northamptonshire, Secretary of the Admiralty under Lord Derby. Greville, in his *Memoirs*, vol. vii., pp. 62-3, writing of the Admiralty scandals, says: "The Stafford Committee has at length closed its proceedings after exposures of the most disgraceful kind, which are enormously damaging, not only to Augustus Stafford himself, but to Lord Derby and his Government. The Duke of Northumberland comes clear out of it as to corruption, but cuts a wretched and ridiculous figure, having failed to perform the duties or to exercise the authority of a First Lord while he was at the Admiralty."



there was cheerfulness in individual attitudes ; the general group was decidedly bold, brisk, and lively. Suddenly there boomed through the hot House the presidential voice of anaxandronic Shaw Lefevre,<sup>1</sup> who announced " Lord John Russell." Loud cries of " Hear, hear." Was he going tearfully to deliver a Jeremiad over English degeneracy and the social confusion of our civilisation ? I saw the decorous faces of the House ; and the meaning and importance the leader threw into his opening bow and preliminary " Mr Speaker—sir," for an instant sustained the notion. But I heard some mumbling, and then some reverential words about " the birth of a prince ;" and the loud cheers—chuckling, jolly, welcome little stranger cheers—disclosed the mystery. It was an address of congratulation to the Queen that she had got an eighth baby. There the baby was, you were requested to believe, lying in Lord John's arms, and being presented—by him as a sort of male Mrs Lilly, to the host of constitutional papas—to the " faithful Commons." We are a domestic nation. It was a pretty scene. One expected next the Sergeant-at-Arms to advance with caudle, and Dr Locock, to be immediately sent up to the Peers as the Lord Deliver us, to appear at the bar, as clerks in departments do, with returns. Lord John, having gently smirked through his business, with all his sympathies as a loyal subject and a *paterfamilias* aroused, sank back into his seat ; and another round of cheers hailed Mr Disraeli, who, dark, and grave, and mysterious, pulled down his vest, put his white hand on the green box—the contrast is so telling—and had the honour of seconding the motion, being sure (here everyone remembered how the Court cuts him) that these motions were something more than ceremonies (here everyone remembered the *Coningsby* chapter, in which he adjures the throne to emerge from its contemptible position as a Doge's arm-chair), inasmuch as with the continuance of the reigning House—(here there were great cheers, every honourable member felt the Queen and the Prince were constantly keeping the consideration in mind)—were

<sup>1</sup> The Speaker.

indissolubly bound up the fortunes of the land. (Loud cheers.) The motion agreed to with acclamation; the sweet, interesting episode—that little oasis of the finer feelings of our nature, &c., amid the stern, metallic desert of business—was over. The House, as usual, passed from its poetry to the orders of the day, just as the artillerymen fired the guns, and then took them to the *caserne* and sponged them, to be ready for the next time.

Joyous feelings being suppressed—loyalty put on one side—the Speaker takes the paper in his hand, puts his glasses on, and booms “Mr Vernon Smith.” Mr Vernon Smith has the first business; and it happens to be in jarring contrast to the duty just got over so pleasantly. Alas! one thinks, it is good to have many Princes—it is good to be affectionately loyal; but here would appear something almost commanding a moment’s oblivion of royal fruitfulness. But nobody down on the floor there notices the contradiction they are going through. The mover there, the favourite nephew of the great Canon Smith, who could have said some bitter things about such an occasion, is all smooth, smug complacency, and is going through his work as a joke worth gentlemen’s attention before they go off to dinner, and out of the way of that frightful Irish debate, which threatens to set in about seven. The business Mr V. Smith has in hand is a motion for another address to Her Majesty—to congratulate her?—no, to ask her to issue a commission to inquire into the corrupt system believed by a certain Committee, which ought to know, to be extensive and permanent in the borough of Cambridge. (Loud cries of “Hear, hear,” too.) I was the Chairman of the Committee, said this right honourable gentlemanly man, which inquired into the allegations of the petition complaining of an undue return for Cambridge; and I can assure the House the disclosures were really frightful. (Hear, hear.) Then he went on to describe the system. He was jocular about one Samuel Long, the local Coppock (I had seen Coppock as I came in, in the vestibule, surrounded by members, with whom he dines every day and

who think him the nicest fellow in the world); and he was humorous, making the House grin, too, about how the bribes to the bribed were given, in Cambridge, by a lady—a lady with a fall—he did not mean in the immoral sense; but who was veiled. And, really, he proceeded, this system is not confined to the poorer voters: it is—ah—the regular thing in Cambridge for all classes, high and low. And he was funny about that universality of the thing; and made curious extracts from the evidence to show that the witnesses admitted it. The House was delighted with the extracts. Then, with a lurch, Mr Smith became moral. How was all this to be remedied? A commission would do much; it would be an exposure; but it would not do all that was wanted. The House hear, heard. I am greatly afraid, said Smith, putting his head on one side, talking in a low key, and with the air of a man quietly settling the question—the House being very attentive—that the evil is in the degraded tone of the constituency themselves. The House hear, heard: it was pleasant to throw all the blame on the country—a relief from responsibility. Smith had made a hit: he felt that, and went on. I am afraid, he said, corruption is not felt to be a disgrace by a voter; and I suspect, therefore, we must wait for some years before we can remedy the evil. (Hear, hear.) The House thought, certainly, it could afford to wait. My friend, Tom Duncombe, said Smith, asks us to widen the electoral districts, and to have no constituency under 20,000 voters. That's all nonsense; suppose you have 20,000 electors, parties may be so balanced, 100 or 200 will turn the scale; and where there are voters who turn the scale, of course you must bribe 'em. (Hear, hear.) Every honourable member felt that. Smith was really talking well. I ask the House, continued the orator, whether it isn't true that so long as there are men willing to be corrupt there will always be money to buy 'em. That was putting it epigrammatically: Q. E. D. Mr Vernon Smith sat down, satisfied that he was a fine specimen of an English gentleman, and that he had hit the nail on the head, and would hear his small speech talked about as the

“right sort of thing, sir—no humbug,” over cutlets in every club in London in an hour.

I heard Mr Labouchere, on the same national theme, on Tuesday. Mr Labouchere is another heavy Liberal,—one of the higher classes, too, who think that as the people is rather scoundrel, and business must be carried on, why they must be bought,—and he made the same sort of speech; but he was somewhat more scrupulous. He spoke in mournful cadences of the rascality of Hull, to inquire into the corruption of which he was asking for a commission, in the same way. One of our oldest mercantile communities! Shocking. Every one of the freemen got 30s. at elections; and not one of the £10 householders would vote, unless the candidate permitted hospitality, and hired a committee-room in their houses. But, said Mr Labouchere, slowly and emphatically, and with that artificial solemnity which he got in the old time, and which he has never lost, and the peculiarity of which is that it is applied to small subjects and great subjects—to the question of a war or the question of a railway, with equal rigidity, “I do believe that there are, nevertheless, a large number of pure, independent, and respectable persons in the constituency of Hull.” Hear—hear,—the House had no doubt; there might be some. He said why he thought so; had he not made this motion, the House would have received a petition from Hull, praying for inquiry (*i.e.* disfranchisement). That settled the matter; the commission would not need the lantern; there were, no doubt, more than two or three honest men in one of our most ancient mercantile communities. Then, deepening into darker solemnity,—finishing his sentences with still abrupter spondees, which is ancient House of Commons style,—Mr Labouchere went into the general question. He had heard opinions that electoral corruption in this country was on the increase; he for one did not believe it. No, sir, his deliberate opinion was, sir, that corruption was on the decrease,—that at the last election it was less than at the previous elections,—and that there was only more talk because there was more virtuous indignation—more

public self-respect. You could see a smile flit along the rows as that came. Mr Labouchere gives excellent dinners, and is a great favourite, and is frightfully rich; but, confound it, that was too absurd. He trusted, sir, to this growing public opinion; it was an age of progress; and, as an evidence, he instanced the readiness with which the House granted these Commissions. Age of progress. Henry Labouchere saw the age of rotten boroughs—sat for one of them; he was a zealot for the Reform Bill of 1832; and in 1853 he has to accuse our third port of only having “several” honest men in its whole community. But no one is in the House to meet such talk as all this—to say “It is not true: you are twaddling,” or, “If this is true, let us abolish representative institutions:” and Hull had as few defenders as Cambridge. The House is running from the horrors of the system as a man flies from a bear,—dropping one garment after another, to delay and feed the monster; or as the shipwrecked do in a rotten boat—throw overboard the heavier cargo. The glaring, hideous evil is obvious, but nobody will face it; and next year, the committees forgotten, we shall have the routine cry for “Reform,” and Lord John, for decency’s sake, suggesting a “measure.” There are only two men who would talk the truth; and these two would put it in opposite lights. Mr Roebuck would make the House translate what it means by hear-hearing the trash of the Smiths and Laboucheres; Sibthorp, on the spot, cynical about Britons, says his say briefly. Commenting on Mr Labouchere on Tuesday he made his usual reverent and pungent quotation from Job<sup>1</sup>—“Ha—ha.” In the sham atmosphere, Sibthorp sounded eloquent for once.

Observing the conduct of the House of Commons in regard to these election matters,—its utter bewilderment and steady ignoring of general conclusions and incapacity of consistent, systematic conduct,—assuming the Smiths and Laboucheres to be faithful interpreters of the average notions and feelings on the subject,—assured that there is no deep sensation at all when you get members out of the

<sup>1</sup> [Job xxxix. 25.]



House on the matter, but a "man of the world" sort of acceptance of things as they are,—it is very difficult to make up one's mind to the belief that when grave topics of national moment are approached there is any hearty faith either in the present or the future among the debaters. There are other pieces played—and the dresses are different—but isn't it farce, too? This *laissez aller* House would appear to the innocent public on Tuesday as having been very thoughtful and earnest on Monday about Education: and it would be a consolation to suppose that though there is indifference about the voting generation as being utterly irreclaimable, there is anxiety to look after the human beings who are growing up, and will return an eternity of Smiths and Laboucheres in the twentieth century. For all this rottenness and corruption from Carlton Club members who have "an object," as Colonel Dickson said, in "getting in," to the 30s. freemen of Hull, who are of course much more contemptible, because their conscience and manhood go at so much lower a figure, the remedy would truly appear to be "National Education." If there was hope anywhere for a resurrection in the Golgothic, "so much a head," public spirit of the age it was in Lord John's long announced measure, with which, as a first dish, the third course of the Session was to be commenced on Monday night. To see and hear all about it it was necessary to be early at the gallery door, for on such a great night, on such a measure, there would be a rush. That was the natural theory. There were not twenty strangers in the Speaker's gallery: and that Speaker's gallery, observe, is a barometrical index of public interest,—as it fills or empties, topics excite or deaden, orators rise or sink. Then the House itself would at least be crowded? When Lord John Russell rose to arrange for the enlightenment of the rising generation there were not one hundred members: and it is odd, but no sooner was he on his legs than a third of those who had been there disappeared. Perhaps Lord John now ranks with the bores: but, remember, that it was two hours to dinner still; and whatever his own cold, unsatisfying



common-place, he was going to announce the intentions, on a great theme, of a strong Government, which included nearly every statesman identified with the subject. And yet this leader of the House of Commons, of whom you will hear men say, "Can't be done without, sir,—Lord John has an enormous personal following,—a man who inspires affection, sir,"—commenced his talk by the remark, that it was quite unnecessary to beseech attention to his opening, since the question was one in which was felt a universal interest. There was a *mal apropos naïveté* about that which forced a laugh, and gave a ludicrous turn to all that was to follow. Why describe what followed? Every one's mind is made up about the measure; and perhaps the general conception is very accurate—that it was about the best measure a too religious country will admit of,—which proves much for our contentious piety, and little for the enlightenment of which we talk at our public dinners:—and the manner in which the measure was proffered was corresponding;—a compromise between an oration and a communication,—a State paper without the punctuation,—the which Lord John (Pitt put in the colons) can to any extent speak off-hand. Always loose, languid, and lumbering, Lord John Russell was, on this occasion, more than ordinarily bald, crude, cold, disheartening. He was not proud of his scheme: and the tone was that of a man somewhat "down" and ashamed; for it is his own fault that he excited the impossible expectations, having ceaselessly for the last six years talked of the urgency of Education, and having deliberately and aforethought made this measure the glory of the Aberdeen Administration. He did not know that a new prince was coming to give *éclat* to the Session.

The debate on the speech was as such debates usually are—utter waste of time, nobody knowing what they were talking about, and no one appreciating the circumstances. Mr W. J. Fox<sup>1</sup> took the opportunity of delivering his annual able and suggestive speech in favour of the secular system, not seeing that after Lord John's more than ever

<sup>1</sup> The eminent Free Trade orator. He died in 1864.

emphatic declaration against that system, and that after such a scheme from such a Cabinet—a coalition Cabinet, which had the utmost interest in doing all that was possible in this direction with the country they are governing—it would be as practical to propose the non-introduction of an address congratulating the Queen on fecundity as to urge on the existing Parliament the regular rout of the education-mongers who prefer to see children “heathens” (it is their phrase) than not to have them of their own particular class of Christians. But Mr Fox was listened to (Lord John had long finished, and the House had come back from dinner), and, having concluded his quiet, argumentative protest, he had got the usual gain—another year—which is something, seeing that to time alone, he, like Mr Labouchere, can trust. But we shall have some good debates on the Government proposal when it comes on in more complete and better comprehended proportions; and it is to be hoped that someone will apply to the education discussions the moral that, if it is all true what we hear,—that the masses are all bribable, the wealthy all bribers, and the aristocracy all like the substitute for the Percy—then it is time to put National Society, British and Foreign Society, and Committee of Council on one side, and try some other plan—say Mr Fox’s,—being tolerably safe that under no *régime*, for our enlightenment, could we be very much worse. Or Mr Phinn’s plan. Mr Phinn—to whose rising position in the House previous reference has been made in this place, for the purpose of showing all barristers that when they become members they must absolutely cease to be forensic, put conceit and priggishness on one side, and be submissive and deferential—said, in the debate on Monday, that he greatly regretted in Lord John’s plan the absence of the “compulsory element.” Mr Phinn is a really enlightened man; quite abreast of his age; and not an unworthy follower, in liberalism and integrity, of Mr Roebuck, at Bath; but it must be confessed this beloved of a crack Liberal constituency has oddly despotic notions of improving the world. He would make it a crime in fathers not

*Mr Phinn's Plan*

to have their children instructed—rational and philosophic, but queer as a proposition in this country and in this century. The same eccentric mental tendency—the result of intense good-humoured and gallant philanthropy, and restless impatience of the Fox and Labouchere recipes, was visible on Wednesday in his amendment on Mr Fitzroy's bill to apply to the characteristic of British back-street Society—the belabouring of wives. Mr Phinn—the incarnation of the sentiment he was wanting to legislate on—a gentleman who (but then he's not married), full of lusty manhood, would undoubtedly commit justifiable homicide upon any assailant of a woman,—led fifty-eight other gentlemen into a lobby of the Senate, April 6, 1853, in favour of the principle of man-flogging. His answer to an objection was very rich. "Public flogging," said Lord Palmerston, "would brutalise the offender still more." "Then let it be private," said Mr Phinn; a response which calls to mind the old House of Commons story of the legislator who was opposed to the Chimney Act, and argued, that if it was cruel to clean a chimney by dragging up a goose, why two ducks would do as well. The motives in this case are clearly good; and the House, which was attentive, and really in earnest in backing this excellent bill, did full justice to them, and Mr Phinn, being a single member, is exposed to no sneers. But if we consider the *morale* of the men who followed him, we begin to question whether these rich and happy fellows are so immaculate in their marital relations that they were entitled to sentence to flogging the wretched savages who, when they quarrel, are more savage than dogs, since dogs have exceptional patience for the weaker sex. He only who had never sinned should have called for the whip; just as only those honourable gentlemen and noble lords who have never traded with convictions for power, or pleasure, or profit, are in a condition to despise Hull freemen. In respect of this question, as to Mr Phinn's brutes, it was a good *mot*, made on Wednesday (*not* publicly), that when the rich man has a row with his spouse, he can seek refuge in his club;

but the poor man has no club, and, accordingly, takes to the cudgel.

The busy air visible last night was affecting; and it was very urgent indeed that something should be done, in the shape of a reduction of the national debt, to balance the increase in the royal family. Mr Gladstone was developed as a great financier by a most marvellously-complicated plan—the intricacy of which may be judged of by the fact that the whole Stock Exchange has been puzzled, and that all the reliable city men in the House confessed themselves last night bewildered—Mr Gladstone, revelling in all the financial refinements and economical ingenuities, was in his element. He is the most rapid speaker who ever spoke in the House of Commons, and, with the analogous speed-distinguished Macaulay when Macaulay was oratorical, he is also the most elegant of sentence-makers, speaking speeches, according to the reporters, which can be transferred from short into long-hand without the alteration of a point or the turn of a phrase. In that way he has long been regarded as a phenomenon,—the climatic specimen of the facilely verbose style of modern Parliament. But he got this species of fame as a talker about subjects admitting of generalities, and it was never supposed his special gifts would allow of his rushing through a Budget as Charles Mathews dashes through a patter song. It was a Budget last night; about a page of a morning paper spoken in two hours! And he hardly referred to a note, never paused a moment, broke through cheers, dashed over interpellations—logic, figures, illustrations, extracts—all pell mell, with a whirl and a fury that took the breath away, left stenography, you could easily see, panting after, only just *not* in vain, and put it utterly out of the power of the honourable gentlemen who wanted to speculate by nine in the morning, or to speak before twelve at night, to put on to paper the slightest hint of the points avalanched transversely through their heads. And he did it all with the utmost ease, and got to the end without turning a hair; and in his after explanations, which were perpetual during the

evening, adding notes to the astonishing text, he was as cool, quiet, and as little excited as though he had been merely answering William Williams a question about the benefits of economical administration in the purchase of tooth-picks for treasury clerks. His was the only speech. Mr Disraeli's was quite a failure, and fell disappointingly ; not that he did not seem right in his notion that all the avant-puffing of the plan had been as disproportioned to the plan itself as the mercantile connection in Cairo between figs and the Prophet—that it was all a *bruit pour une omelette*—but that Mr Disraeli elaborated a conviction in the audient minds that he was not “up” in the subject, and was incapable of following his supplanter in the Finance Ministry on *this* ground, which he himself had cultivated too much like an amateur Protectionist, converted suddenly into a model farmer, with the success usually attendant on such experiments.



## CHAPTER X

Kossuth—John Bright—The Advertisement Duty—The  
Manchester School

*April 16.*

The House of Commons recipe for a Coalition Government would appear to be, "when taken to be well shaken;" and the Coalition Government, like "women, spaniels, and walnut-trees," seems to be the better for beating—at anyrate takes it as a manner of course. It set the fashion of "unprincipled combinations," and accepts the penalty; Mr Disraeli having to the full his revenge on Thursday for the coalescing vote which drove him prematurely from office; and Mr Butt<sup>1</sup> and Mr Cobden, on Tuesday, on the Kilmainham and Clitheroe matters, affording to the nation ample evidence that there may, after all, be some inconvenience from a too philosophical dispensation with "Government by party." But, properly considered, the teasing incidents of the week contribute perhaps new evidence of the immense strength of the Cabinet, which has illustrated the fable of the bundle of Sticks, and the sagacity of Lord Shelburne's notion, that if the great families would only share and share alike, the destinies of humanity would be easily manageable. A weak Government would have been forced into resignation after such a set of divisions; a strong Government does not feel the blows, hardly thinks it decent to notice the intentions, of dwarfs in league against the giant. Besides, is not Lord John leader, and is he not famous as the Toots of politics, whose view of any

<sup>1</sup> An Irish barrister, afterwards leader of the Home Rule party. He died in 1879.



catastrophe is that it's of no consequence? Struck on one cheek, he is notorious for a development of face; or at all events the extent of his indignation when kicked has been the procrastinating "You'd better not do that again." The present is also a Government which takes too high ground to be sensitive to petty assaults. Lost in comprehensive considerations about civil and religious liberty, why should it mind a snub about Kilmainham, a correction about Clitheroe, or a setting down about a paltry £200,000 worth of advertisement duty? Pistol Gladstone, pressed for a reckoning with wanters of situations, is exclamatory about golden joys and the reduction of the national debt. Skimpole Sidney Herbert, pushed at the doors of Kilmainham for payment of a debt for lodgings, goes off into statesmanlike generalities about the beauties of benevolence and the bouquet of British virtue. Cheapen literature! said Lord John to Mr Gibson, "How can you waste time in such talk about details, when I have put before you a bill for national education?" "Stop corruption" is the cry of committee after committee, and Lord John does agree, generally, to a commission, to pass the time; but what more can you expect when he's so engaged in the crowning victory of religious liberty which he got last night? Leader of a Government beaten four times in a week, you might suppose some slight modesty in his tone in the presence of the triumphant Jew gentleman, who rewards by defeats the Cabinet which removes Hebrew disabilities. But Lord John, always looking after great principles, is quite indifferent about small facts. Religious liberty is his creed when he passes an Ecclesiastical Titles' Bill, and political liberty is his creed when he agrees with Lord Palmerston (when the two agree, their unanimity is wonderful) that the system of police visits to political refugees is suitable to the English climate. All these inconsistencies are discerned accurately enough by the parties who have an interest in disabusing the public of a credulity in conservative liberality; and though there are advantages about a coalition which

includes both the preacher and the frightful example, the influence of the last is in this case likely to be the longest felt. Those interpellations about Kossuth last night were extremely inconvenient to a Government which wanted to look bold advanced liberalism through the immediately following debate on the third reading of the Rothschild bill. Lord Palmerston jauntily cut the connection between the Treasury bench and the below the gangway, in refusing proper information upon the prompt and noble appeals of Kossuth's friends—Walmsley and Duncombe; and the consequence was, that when Lord John went into the lobby at one in the morning with the Radicals, the Radicals felt not that they were being led, but that the association was as accidental and as unsympathetic as on the previous evening, with Mr Disraeli and Lord Stanley. Lord Palmerston, apologising in a lively way, and, as a matter of politeness, to *cher* Aberdeen for his revolutionary reputation (God knows Lord Palmerston was always maligned and was always a sound *réactionnaire*—only *incompris*), may have been a ceremony contributory to Cabinet council comforts, and the pleasantries of that Greenwich whitebait in July, to which statesmen look as the real posterity. But if Lord Palmerston insists on a justification of his tendencies, the subscribers to the portrait must in decency shrink away from his friendship; and take away liberal Lord Palmerston, and nothing remains but a coalition consisting entirely of frightful examples. This is certain, that the Radicals yesterday evening knew that the Government had been blundering about the Refugees, and inferred from the Home Secretary's too audacious reserve that the Cabinet had stumbled with an intent (Her Majesty's nerves must be consulted now, and dynasties hang oddly together), and equally certain it is that the Radicals were very angry, and that the ten minutes' talk between Palmerston Walmsley, T. Duncombe, and Bright, separated the Administration of Lord Aberdeen from the popular sympathies further than even Mr Disraeli, with all his knowledge of the men to be operated upon, could

that morning, ruminating on his triumph, have contemplated. This was traceable in the succeeding debate; only Mr Bethell,<sup>1</sup> who is quaintly professional and talks too much in unpunctuated italics, to be either quite interesting or quite useful, supported the Government: and his support was as disinterested as that of the whitebait dinner waiters; and only Mr Bright supported the bill—a nice distinction which Mr Bright made unaffectedly prominent. The fifteenth debate of the same bill could hardly, one would think, be made interesting, and induce much good oratory. But last night should have been *the* debate, inasmuch as Government is supposed to be calculating whether it shall not resign if defeated by the Lords; and yet the languor of the talk is afflictively impressive. Not that there was no provocation to the Liberals. Only conceive Mr Bernal Osborne free (I am mistaken in him if he does not now wish he were), replying in hock and soda water tones to Mr Cumming Bruce,<sup>2</sup> who remarked, in a loud Scotch accent, that he was not “eentollerant,” inasmuch as he thought that Jews “eenteresting” as a people, certainly at present tossed and scattered under the Divine wrath, but doubtless in time to be received into the Divine favour, “and let us not presumptuously accelerate the period!” Was there no provocation to Liberal wit in the absence of Mr Disraeli, while Mr Walpole was showing that if the Jews were admitted into the House of Commons, a Jew might some day be made a Privy-Councillor—a frightful consummation in the eyes of a Protestant gentleman? But Mr Osborne is busy victualling the Navy with pork; and Mr Bright is too savage to be satirical. Of his powerful logic, his daring invective, and his overwhelming sneers, as evidenced last night, let Manchester, however, be proud, as it is her inclination to be; and, above all, let Radical constituencies who prefer Whigs because your William Williamsses are laughed or jeered down, observe that Mr Bright made his speech last night in as full a House, half

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Westbury, the famous Chancellor. He died in 1873.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Elgin and Nairn.

full only when he rose, as Sir Robert Peel could get in his free-trade days; and that the ultra quaker, ultra democratic gentleman, advocating negative Christianity, and attacking the House of Lords, the Bishops, and the respectable interests, was as patiently and as deferentially listened to as Prince Albert when he tells Lord Clarendon what his young friend the Emperor of Austria says of Louis Kossuth. So much for great ability when it condescends to have patience, and to study the forms of parliamentary good-breeding. Five years ago, Mr John Bright had a worse hearing than pathological Mr Murrough<sup>1</sup> could get now. Three years ago only, Lord John Russell complained feelingly of Mr Bright's violent manners and narrow mind. Last night Lord John, blushing for his passion for religious liberty, could not find words strong enough to express his admiration for the most accomplished of tribunes, who has become also the most exquisite of elocutionists, and the most impressive of gentlemen.

But despite the intense commiseration of the Cabinet for Jews, what is occurring, in illustration of coalition tendencies in other directions, is slowly damaging both the individual and collective position of Ministers in the country. This eagerness to take advantage of Kossuth's supposed indiscretion to placate Austria does not look well in Lords who are, *par excellence*, the "Ministers of England;" and, testing their principles by their details, there are other awkward inferences. There seems, in the first place, a careful management of the "corruption" material, which is being turned up, so as to damage the Reform cause—Lord John putting up his Vernon Smiths and Laboucheres, to hesitate suspicions of the results of a further extension of the suffrage; and, in the next place, the small educational bill, the anti-press opposition, the attempt to shirk the Indian responsibility, and the postponement or putting on one side of all other pressing great topics, all show that an effect of a coalition is the effect of too numerous a corps of cooks. Departmentally, there is progress and success. Sir James Graham at the

<sup>1</sup> John Patrick Murrough, M.P. for Bridport.

Admiralty, Mr Cardwell at the Board of Trade, the Duke of Newcastle at the Colonial Office, and Lord Palmerston (*vide* his activity on behalf of Austria) at the Home Office, are doing wonders. But there is no trace of any oneness in the Cabinet—no hint that all the talents can resolve themselves into one genius, and conceive worthily the greatness of their duties and their opportunities, as a Government. There is pettiness in the attempt to deal with the election exposures; there is a little mind in the Education Bill. The shame to the Treasury bench, on Thursday,<sup>1</sup> was not in the numbers, but in the pettiness of Lord John Russell, and the fidgety deprecations of Mr Gladstone, who has sunk too soon into the cant of Chancellors of the Exchequer, and too readily shirked his responsibility as a somewhat trusted and petted statesman, by the affectation of scrupulosity as guardian of a revenue which experience shows bears very well too much minute meddling. It was said, on Thursday night, after the divisions, that Government knew they were to be beaten, courted defeat, and provoked it purposely, and in the simulated degradation had some deep design, which leading journals will be requested not to penetrate. It is undoubtedly true that it was well known on Thursday morning that the Tories would “dodge” on the first resolution; that the brigade, led by newspaper proprietors, would go with Mr Gibson on all the resolutions; and that, if so, Ministers could not escape. But the speeches of the Ministers in the debate, while they indicate apprehensions, indicate no tact: for Mr Gladstone was angrily obstinate, Mr Sydney Herbert furious with Mr Disraeli, and Lord John took no pains to anticipate Lord Robert Grosvenor in warning Liberals not to play the game of the Tories. And what are we to think of a Cabinet which is so destitute of adroitness as to quarrel with the House for £180,000—knowing when they enter the fight that they are certain to be beaten, and that the consequence of the defeat would be to weaken their own position when they came to the Budget?

<sup>1</sup> [Beaten on the question of Advertisement Duty.]



Messrs Gladstone and Herbert might be afraid to provoke opponents in the press who want no change; but if they did seek to have the abolition forced on them, they might, at least, have arranged for a more dignified retreat than they were able to command after Mr Disraeli had spoken for the Tories, and Mr Maguire for the Brigade. Very slight satisfaction can be obtained by denouncing Mr Disraeli's "impudence"<sup>1</sup> His effrontery was sublime, no doubt: his cool dishonesty deserved the hysterical reproaches of bewildered Lord Robert Grosvenor, who was shocked at the idea of voting for the motion if there was a chance of its being carried. But if the effrontery is successful, Mr Disraeli is laughed with, and not laughed at: and though Mr Gladstone's clerks will sympathise with him—having to get a bran new Budget out by Monday—they will nevertheless join the pleased public, and grin among themselves. The strongest of Governments cannot afford to look ludicrous; and Mr Gladstone's perplexity, despite the tragic rebuke which he now frowns, is excessively amusing. Mr Disraeli, in his dexterous speech, confessed, in accounting for his readiness to face a cheap and universal press, that he and his party did not appeal merely to the reason of mankind; they address themselves also to the feelings—as in offering dear loaves, say: and an admiring country, while it will condemn the logic of Mr Disraeli's conduct, will be apt to enjoy very heartily its point. Lord Robert Grosvenor was astonished at the right honourable gentleman; the conduct of the right honourable gentleman, sir, can only lower the character of public men—the Government that was about to be beaten cheering the sentiment vehemently. But Mr Disraeli has never in his career aimed at the chivalric; and at present he is devoting all his attention to teasing and torturing men who are conceitedly too strong, in whose liberality he does not believe any more than he does in Lord Derby's, and who, to get in, put him out. The character of public men is far more injured by liberal statesmen turning Austrian spies,

<sup>1</sup> [In office, in the same year, he had opposed a similar motion.]



and by a Government, pledging itself to education, carelessly refusing to take excise shackles off the diffusion of knowledge; and most of all, the character of public men suffers by such a manifestation of bad management blindly inviting defeat on a popular question. The character of public men suffers from public men twaddling; and if we get over the routine deference we pay to men in position, we shall find that Lord John twaddled in his answer to Mr Gibson and Mr Bright. Contrast the intellect and the statesmanship of the speeches of the Manchester school, imperfect as that school is in many respects, with the speeches of Ministers—make every allowance for the position of guardians of the revenue—and you will see that both Lord John and Mr Gladstone fail in an appreciation of the spirit of their time.<sup>1</sup> As to Mr Gibson, so unpretending as to put his commonsense almost as commonplace, he nearly roused enthusiasm. The question should, perhaps, in strict propriety, be in the hands of one of the many journalists who are now in the House. There are more journalists in the present House of Commons than ever were in Louis Philippe's Chamber of Deputies. But the advantages of a disinterested advocacy are manifold, and it is just to say that Mr Gibson has mastered the controversy in a wonderful way. He exhausted the question on Thursday, and so cleverly mixed up his abstract argument and practical illustrations that he was interesting, lively, and cheered by a tolerably full House, to his last sentence; achieving thus an oratorical success which many much abler and greater men might be proud of. If he committed a fault, it was in assuming that the House had confidence in the people, which he did throughout; whereas, foreseeing defeat on the two resolutions, he should, this time, have appealed to the people against the House, and dared the truth. But his faith in the faith of the House would appear to be a fact. He was speaking of the frauds on the Post Office, and went on to say, he did not think that unstamped publications were frequently sent through the post; "for

<sup>1</sup> [Mr Gladstone put himself right before the session was over.]

my opinion is that there is a great indisposition among Englishmen generally to defraud any branch of the revenue." Thereat the whole House, of all sides, people's party included, burst into a joyous yell of laughter at Mr Gibson's simplicity. Mr Gibson was puzzled, stared, stopped, but could not make it out, and went on again. But the moral of the yell was plain enough; the Commons House, which also cheers and crows Smith, and admits with Labouchere that there may be a few honest men in Hull, has no great belief in the public virtue of the Commons; and if Mr Gibson had had more self-possession, which you could hardly expect of him, in the full swing of his argument, he would have taken a note of the fact, and parenthetically communicated it for the benefit of the enlightened people. Mr Bright made also a telling speech; and though it might be too evident that his reason for wanting the taxes off knowledge was that, when they were off, there might be a Manchester school daily paper in London—and it is very odd that Manchester can never get a London press platform—his trenchant syllogisms were none the less effectual that we could detect his motive; since, why should not Mr Bright dictate a morning paper in London, as well as half-a-dozen weekly papers in the provinces? Third in the Manchester triumvirate came Mr Cobden, and he was very practical, offering to make a bargain with Government, and to give up educational grants if they would leave him free the educational machinery of the press. There was "a laugh" at that; but there was a solemn point in it, which should have told more on that little-caring assembly. Mr Cobden however, made a strange omission in his speech: he did not specify, as he did in his late Leeds speech, that the new papers he wants must publish without opinions; or, in other words, that what he means by enfranchisement of the press is the multiplication of uncriticised orations of Richard Cobden. The Member for the West Riding would go down to posterity as a Demosthenes—without notes: a desire which indicates improper unfamiliarity with the difficulties of education, and less consideration

for posterity than is usual with that most conscientious of men.

Incapacity for bold action—for that first function of government—leading the nation—is too visible in the fatuous and feeble proceedings suggested or acquiesced in by Lord John Russell in regard to the election petitions. Confusion and contradiction is still going on: commission after commission is issuing upon opposite grounds; committee after committee is reporting differently on the same character of evidence; and yet the official “leader,” to whom others look in their non-responsibility or their helplessness, is not only doing nothing, but he appears unconscious that it is not his function to propose system and principle where now there is neither one nor the other. And the difficulty is only beginning, for when the Commissioners have reported, with the possibility of only reporting in one way, the disfranchisement begins; and the already captious tone of the Lords, even in such a case as that of Canterbury, promises very combative conferences between the two Houses. In fact, we shall be in the middle of general disfranchisement about the time (early next session) when a contemporaneous extension of the suffrage is due; and what a fine spectacle it will be for an enlightened nation to have this sort of “votes” in circulation:—Monday, orders of the day: 1. Parliamentary Reform Bill (Lord John Russell), second reading. 2. Disfranchisement of Hull (Lord John Russell). Friday:—1. Parliamentary Reform Bill Committee. 2. Disfranchisement of Liverpool (Mr Cardwell). Yet that is exactly the catastrophe impending, and for which no one seems preparing; so that we have only two things to think of Ministers; either that they are very great blunderers, or they intend to arrange excuses for another year's adjustment of the long-promised reform of the Reform Bill.

## CHAPTER XI<sup>1</sup>

Position of Parties—Gladstone's Budget—The House of Lords—  
Scotch Drunkenness—Position of the Government

No. 32 Chesham Place, is our British Temple of Janus ; and its opening at one o'clock to-day (if the plans of the week are not changed at the last moment) is the signal that there is war again in the land. Mr Disraeli is reported to have said recently, previous to the delivery of the Budget, "Strong Government—Bah ! I can turn them out whenever I like:" and the question of the day is—does Mr Disraeli like to turn out the Government ? Fakradeen, as those who remember the sketch of Disraeli by Disraeli, in *Tancred*, know, excelled in "combinations," and there are several at his disposal now. Mr Disraeli and Mr Duffy are images of each other—ethnological evidences of the contact of the Semitic and Milesian races—and fate seems to suggest, as oddly, a political confederation, headed by these leaders, of the extreme Protestant and Tory with the extreme Catholic and Revolutionary party against a Government which has coalesced, and so cancelled, and thus admirably represents the period in its recommendatory negotiations. It is an age of coalitions ; a coalition turned out Mr Disraeli ; a coalition threatens to turn out Mr Gladstone ; and this result of national acquiescence in the cry of "measures, not men"—as well cry manhood, but not man !—is the attainment of an admirable party *juste milieu*—the state of dead lock. Listen to an Irish Brigadier laying it down to Mr Hayter, who strokes his chin, while calculating is there any place that would suit the honourable member ? "You

<sup>1</sup> [April 23, after Mr Gladstone's Budget had been brought in and favourably received.]

see you must give us what we ask; neither you nor the Tories can keep power if we keep aloof from you. Give us a repeal of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill and Tenant Right (and, by the by, get rid of that infernal Keogh) and we'll disband. We have you on the hip—we have Disraeli on the hip—and you *must* make terms, or—of course I never talk to him, but I have occasionally met Mackenzie prejudiced about Maynooth, but a deuced good fellow—or,—I merely throw this out as a suggestion,—he *will*." A Great Briton, like Hayter, does not like being at the mercy of the Brigade; but he knows all this is true; and if England is to be sold, Hayter would rather not let Mackenzie make the bargain. Observe the position of parties; remembering that Mr Duffy can get 30 whipped—for Ireland is in earnest, and would only return the faithful—and a dissolution is not impossible. Say that Disraeli leads an amendment for a differentiation of the income tax, he has 200 at his back. The Radicals would, much against their will, shrink away from the Government—Disraeli and Gladstone (not counting on all the Radicals even) would then be fairly matched; and Messrs Duffy and Moore could turn the scale. Again, supposing Mr Disraeli led an amendment against the extension of the income-tax to Ireland, and that he would have the whole of the Irish members with him (not an impossible rascality), the Government could hardly escape. Supposing that Mr Gibson leads an amendment for the total repeal of the advertisement duty, Mr Disraeli would vote with him; and there again the Brigade could choose which jobbery should be heaviest. If the Brigade does turn out the Government, England would be tolerably disposed to disfranchise Ireland; and consideration of the consequences may induce sagacity. If Mr Disraeli put the Government in a minority, and so tested the Government threat—"the Budget or a Dissolution"—Mr Disraeli would only be bringing Government back to power with greater strength and chances than ever; and Fakradeen does not affect "combinations" for the sake of resultless kaleidoscopic groupings. Mr Disraeli is not ready; Lord Derby had no



policy to announce last Saturday in St James's Square, where Lady Derby allows followers—and Tadpole would decidedly dissuade from going to the country without a cry—without even a whimper about protection—more especially as those “cursed committees,” cut up so awfully this year; it would be no joke finding the Colonel Dickson class to “bleed.” The Budget, then, has a good chance of passing; and, of course, if Ministers saw they were safe from any attempts to turn them out, they would consent to one or two alterations in detail. So much the Radicals think they are entitled to ask as salve for forswearing their devotion to differentiation. And Gladstone, too, to have refused them this—Gladstone, the greatest differentiator of his age—a man who not only spread the one hide of Oxford over the whole of Rome—but, first of all, split all the hairs!

But isn't this position of Radicalism,—obliged to vote for that income tax which their Committee reported against, and which they told their constituents they would never have,—rather impotent and ludicrous? “There is not the slightest compulsion,” an independent Government observes, “but if you don't,—vote against us, certainly,—we'll dissolve and appeal.” There's the pound of flesh you bargained for;—will you “bleed”? People's party is sulky, but tamed: the “Manchester school,” which talked so large on Monday night, on Tuesday, and even on Wednesday, finds even Manchester is not with it, and gloomily gives way. They don't like the Government, they are angry with Palmerston for his ko-too to Francis Joseph: they are vexed with Osborne because he only jests at them; with Molesworth because, like other parvenus, he affects having lived in the Cabinet all his life, and has got more short-sighted than ever—the constant glare of red tape and red boxes has that effect on our public men. They are angry, generally, because they would have given Government *carte blanche* if they only got the differentiation—that point over which Mr Hume, like Mr Dick, can never get in his “memorials.” Ask the milder Radicals what they will do, and they say, “I won't



play Disraeli's game—he's a dangerous man." Ask the more ultra, and they shrug their shoulders, and say, "What's the use of dissolving before the Reform Bill? What's the use of riddling another House through that Committee corridor which stinks of corruption already?" But, still, people's party would be more powerful if they would do what the Brigade do—stick together, and propose terms—for Lord Aberdeen is the most impressionable of men, as Lord John is supposed to know now, and as Prince Albert knew when he chose him to govern England. The great want of the Radicals is a leader—not for the House, there are only too many clever men among them—but for private influence and control; and until they get hold of a man with the position and character to fashion them into rational organisation, they will always be comparatively useless for the people, and as grumbling and unhappy a set as they are this week. Lord Goderich,<sup>1</sup> promising to be the better Russell of a nobler liberalism, may see his way when he is older, and when Mr Dick has finished his memorial: but when the Democracy's delegates go into the Chesham Place dining-room to-day, they will be very helpless for want of a plan; and Lord John will find the screw of dissolution effectual for all Mr Gladstone's purposes.

Undoubtedly, however, the weakness of the Radical position is to be traced, not only to their own bad tactics, but to the distinct acceptance of the Budget by the country. Mr Gladstone has passed on to the first place in the eyes of the nation, as financier; and, after all, in this country, your greatest financier is your greatest statesman. Peel won his Premiership by his practical grasp of the material business—the management of the taxes, so as to put them in the least unacceptable form; the great deficiency in Lord John Russell's career is, that his spirited generalisations about great principles have been unaccompanied by striking conceptions of finance; Mr Disraeli broke down, as a prominent man, from being unequal to a Budget occasion; and Mr Gladstone, who has taken his

<sup>1</sup> The present Marquis of Ripon.

business countrymen by storm, must be watched for the future as the man into whose hands will by degrees come the wielding of Great British destinies. The "pony Peel" was a misnomer: he has succeeded to his chief as obviously next man. His new position in the country is reflected in the House of Commons; and the technical "leading" by Lord John now becomes not only ridiculous, but offensive. Mr Gladstone stands high above all his colleagues, in either House, in personal and political character—in deep and earnest honesty of purpose—and in the amplitude of his knowledge, not only of the speciality of his department, but emphatically of public affairs; and obviously he was judged too hastily (journalists cannot help that) in supposing that he did not profoundly appreciate the tone of the House and the spirit of the dominant bodies of his countrymen. Boundless in his ambition, such a man for the future has those around him at his service. With a House of Commons position of twenty years, his lead becomes a privilege which exhausted resources like those of Lord John Russell can no longer dispute, and which there is not another man to pretend to. Mr Gladstone answers at least to Mr Disraeli's description of Peel—"the most perfect member of Parliament in the country;" and he is something more than Peel—he has more dignity in his *pose* (Peel would have succeeded even more had he not been so plausible), and a finer tone as a speaker. The leading journal happily said of Mr Gladstone's oratorical style, that it was "copious rotundity;" and that is exactly the style for Parliament, on great occasions. Mr Gladstone candid, argumentative, dignified, but deferential, is superb in debate; while his only great parliamentary rival, Mr Disraeli, is greater in a discussion (there is a strong distinction), because Mr Disraeli aims at the "elegant conversation," which somebody said, taking only one view, was the correct House of Commons style. The two men should always be *vis-à-vis*—and as now—the eternal Pitt and Fox of the time—for Mr Disraeli is unrivalled as the jesting, watchful, guerrilla leader of an Opposition; and Mr Gladstone is the beau ideal of a spokesman of "Her

Majesty's Ministers." The Budget is not only a collection of proposals ; it is a great parliamentary performance ; and when we speak of Mr Gladstone's success on Monday, we should think of him not only as an author, but as an actor. Lord Castlereagh used to say he wished to God the labour could be divided, and he'd do the thinking, if he were allowed to hire a fellow as a talker. Mr Gladstone is the best talker of the day ; after great study and care, certainly ; and to have succeeded in the oratory of a Budget so vast and complex as this year's, is a feat which places him immeasurably above everyone but the Opposition leader. A Budget that took five hours to talk, delivered in a musical voice—sonorous, rounded, perfectly modulated exquisitely arranged, as a speech, to awake and keep attention, piquing and teasing curiosity, sustained and sustaining the House from the first sentence to the last—that is something which, as an affair of voice and will, not more than half-a-dozen men in the empire could do. It is not a speech ; it is not an address ; it is a statement, a great state paper being oratorised ; and there can be no giving way to thoughts that rush up as you go—which would be a relief—no yielding to the suggestion of a cheer or an interruption ; there must be the most rigid restraint over the crowding ideas—the most exact accuracy in the sentences, and even in the very words chosen—the most perfect balancing of parts ; more than all, there must be no errors of commission—there must be no errors of omission ; nothing must be put wrong, and nothing must be overlooked ; and if you consider all this, and that this enormous mental process, with the enormous physical difficulty of managing the voice, keeping on the legs, and *willing* the most determined self-possession, goes on in a House crowded in every corner, representatives of an eager world—with an Opposition, daring and capable, before him, and not less suggesting nervousness, colleagues who envy him or tremble for him, at his back,—you will allow that the man who gets through the work, and gets through it with a triumph, must be a wonderful person with an intellectual vigour you hardly supposed humanity could attain. Yet

Mr Gladstone took it all quietly, and did it quietly, and left the House and went home quietly—probably mentioning to Mrs Gladstone, as a reason for being rather tired that he had been saying a “few words” that evening. My belief is, that had there been no clock in the House he would have talked for a week—Wednesday’s papers announcing to a wondering empire—“Left speaking”—and Thursday’s beginning with, “After these preliminary remarks, sir.”

Overshadowed by the Budget, and the calculations its consequences force on attention, the other interests of the week are few. The old contrasts which I so often insist on presenting, as illustrations of a system which is only to be reformed in this age by laughter, are yet as visible this week as in all preceding weeks of recent sessions. The House of Lords has had a couple of religious debates: one on Maynooth on Monday—Lord Winchilsea<sup>1</sup> was telling his House that Popery was damnable, and ought not to be supported by a Protestant empire, while Mr Gladstone, in the other, was proposing to get 3d. in the pound out of the incomes of Irish Roman Catholic gentlemen to carry on the said empire—and one, last night, on the necessity of clergy reserves to keep the Canadians to respectable Christianity. The anxiety of the Upper House about the Protestant religion was thus sufficiently shown; and it will be observed that last night the Bishop of Oxford<sup>2</sup>—who spoke so eloquently in favour of new bishops at the Wednesday meeting, to raise a colonial Episcopal fund—was duly in his “place of peril,” which he defined as the proper location of apostolical representatives. But take one or two of the subjects of the week to point the reality and the earnestness of the Christianity of Parliament. On Wednesday, some thirty or forty Scotch gentlemen joined in stating to the House of Commons that Scotland was so universally a drunken country that the sale of whiskey must be restrained as we restrain the sale of arsenic. Every night

<sup>1</sup> An ultra Protestant. He fought the famous duel with the Duke of Wellington in 1829. He died in 1858.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Wilberforce.

this week the Commons have received a report from a committee unseating members for bribery, or have appointed a commission practically to disfranchise some place or another for its general corruption; so that Sir John Tyrrell, late on Tuesday,—a heavy country squire, never intended by nature to be up till midnight, and therefore rather bewildered at that hour—blustered out savagely that if they went on this way, why, he'd be hanged if there'd be a borough member left. Then, also, on Tuesday, the House of Lords were considering the case of an Irish magistrate who had been suspended from office in consequence of partisan conduct at an election; and peer after peer pointed out that "intimidation" is the universal electoral system in Ireland—one peer attributing this to the priests, another peer mentioning the landlords, and both asseverations finding assurance in the evidence given before the Mayo Petition Committee, where it was clearly made out that the elector in Ireland is rather in a ticklish position, for if he votes for a Brigadier he loses his "holding," and if he votes for a Derbyite, he loses his soul; and, as one of a pastoral and simple race, he prefers starvation to damnation. The Wednesday's sitting and the Scotch drunkenness discussion were very enlivening—such a day as the strangers haven't had for many a year. Observe who was leading the discussion as framer of the bill—Mr Forbes Mackenzie, Derbyite, whipper-in, triumvir of the Carlton Club cellar, a member for Liverpool because he would, and Mr Cardwell would not, vote against the Maynooth grant. Why does he vote against the Maynooth grant? Because he thinks Popery fatal to the souls, and temporally mischievous to Irishmen. What religion would he substitute? His own, which is John Knox's, and which, after an influence of 300 years, has had such an effect that the Scotch confess themselves the most drunken of God's people. Surely Mr Mackenzie should pause in attributing social and political results to particular religious creeds; should at least leave the now temperate Irish alone with their Popery, if they cannot have Calvinism without the



“crater.” But notice also the way in which all the Scotch gentlemen were nonplussed in the debate on their national sin by two English members. Mr Heyworth,<sup>1</sup> representing the teetotal interest, said to the Scotch gentlemen, Are you in earnest in your desire to reform your countrymen? If so take the pledge; join me, and set an example to the nation. The Scotch gentlemen laughed; every one of them dined out, as Scotch members should that day, and with “politics on hand,” did *not* “leave all claretless the unmoistened throttle.” Then Mr Henry Drummond—who is to the feast of reason in the House what the skeleton was to Egyptian debauches—said also, Are you in earnest? Then why do you insist on such an observance of the Sabbath in your country that, as the people are not allowed to walk in the fields, or to see their friends in towns, you drive them into gloomy and solitary drinking at home? The Scotch gentlemen did not laugh at that; it was a bitter truth and told, and did good perhaps. But there are other odd facts to notice. Mr Mackenzie, as Carlton Club cellar triumvir, distributed the election funds last July. What for? Why to bribe some, and to make drunk all the electors. Observe, then, his morality; he opens the beer casks in England, but he shuts up the whiskey shops in Scotland. Accepting all his facts, however—Scotland painted by a Scotchman—why does he not urge on his party the expediency of leaving the colonies without bishops a little while longer, and also leaving Christianity to take care of itself in Canada, in order that there may be the undivided devotion of surplus wealth (it’s a place of peril for surplice wealth, too,) of Tories and Protestants to complete apostolic work in Scotland? Why issue a commission to investigate social consequences of John M’Hale in Ireland, and not inquire into social consequences of John Knox in Scotland? His party is going to beat the Government next week in the Lords on the Jew Bill, on the ground that it would unchristianise the Legislature. It is, therefore, taken for granted that every honourable member is a believer in the Christian faith, and that the precepts of Christianity are

<sup>1</sup> Laurence Heyworth, M.P. for Derby.



carried out in their integrity in society and politics by that House. Nothing is meant if that is not meant; and the Lords will gravely throw the bill out again on that ground distinctly. Lord Derby will induce the Lords to do this; and Lord Derby will then, next day, consult about Gladstone with Mr Disraeli, his friend, and his lieutenant, who has openly and in a deliberate book vindicated the Jews on the ground, that if they had not caused the Great Sacrifice, noble lords and honourable members would never have been redeemed. That seems absurd; but that is what the Lords are going to do; and that is what Lord Derby will do afterwards. He will subsequently send for Forbes Mackenzie, and arrange what money would be wanting, and what men could be relied on for an election. And all the Lords who won't unchristianise the Legislature will subscribe handsomely, as they did last time, when one of them gave a cheque for £10,000. Not for the new bishops. Not even to enable the poor clergyman's clothing society to have larger transactions in the east end of Holywell Street and the west end of the New Cut. Not at all. To buy the country: vary the phrase as you will, as Mr Mackenzie will when he speaks of it to Mr Brown; but that would be the fact: on a general election the country is in the market, and the Tory and Protestant party think it worth buying. Happy country—so rich that it can find a purchaser.

And the election *morale* leads to the House *morale*. The noble lords and the honourable gentlemen buy the country; they, therefore, look leniently on Sir B. Hall's conviction of Mr Stafford of having sold the navy. The House cheered Sir James Graham, who excels in elaborated obsequiousness of compliment, when that decidedly right honourable baronet said that Mr Stafford's "personal honour" had been unimpeached. The leading journal does not agree with him: most people out of the House agree with the leading journal; but mark the *morale* of the acquittal and the cheer. Personal dishonour is in telling a lie—that is all; but there is no "personal" dishonour in selling the service. Had Mr Stafford admitted a falsehood

it would have been awkward; but he denied that; admitting, however, that he had done all he could to return Government candidates, by walking with them through dockyards—and he remains an “honourable gentleman.” And he voted against unchristianising the legislature; and he’ll dine with the Bishop of Oxford before the month is out.

The great Budget, and the immense personal success of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, have no doubt raised the Government out of the slough into which their negotiations were dragging them. The free-trade Budget gives them the forward and positive position which they wanted. They looked liberal and full of life, facing Lord Derby and his Carlton friends last night in the Lords with their Canada Bill, based on a principle originating with them—absolute colonial self-government. They looked well when Mr Fitzroy brought in a Cab-Reform Bill—the real sort of Reform Bill wanted by a cynical and material nation. Administrative Reform is the forte of a coalition, who, afraid of one another, fear to face principles; and such a set of resolutions as Mr James Wilson has put out on Customs’ Reform, and such bills as those of Mr Cardwell on Pilotage and Mercantile Marine, gratify inordinately that vast commercial community who are so much in the lobby, and have consequently so much to do with the tendencies of an enlightened House, which cheerfully cheers protests against class legislation. Last Saturday, after a week which had known Lord John Russell’s drivel about Taxes on Knowledge (on Milner Gibson’s motion), and which had become acquainted with Lord Palmerston’s anxiety to introduce a Viennese police system to the emulation of Sir Richard Mayne<sup>1</sup> and Mr Whittle Harvey, the Government stood very queerly; and people were believing in the exactness of Mr Disraeli’s boast. This present Saturday, the Government is a really strong and successful and positive Government, so that Lord John is pronounced unwise to open No. 32 Chesham Place at all.

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Mayne and Daniel Whittle Harvey, Commissioners of Police.

## CHAPTER XII

The Canada Clergy Reserves Bill—Tory Unsuccess—The Budget—Sir E. Bulwer Lytton—Sir Francis Baring—The Jew Bill and the Lords

*April 23.*

THE great parliamentary fact of the week is, that Lord Palmerston and Messrs Walmsley, Cobden and Bright, have had a quarrel about Kossuth; that Mr Bright was very pale while Lord Palmerston was getting up a laugh against his "constitutional knowledge;" and that two-thirds of the House of Commons—more particularly the Tory benches—cheered a Coalition Government, while it was rebuking Radicals for questioning the Great British propriety of introducing the continental police spy system into our glorious institutions. What it all means, nobody knows; and the cheering of the House shows that nobody cares; and, *ad interim*, waiting Lord Palmerston's explanations, sensible people will enjoy the spectacle of the presenters of the portrait of Lord Palmerston, assuring one another that the "*Civis Britannicus sum*" hero is an Austrian tool. And the enlightened country will appreciate a Coalition Government which does not even leave out Fouché.

But a Government which has got on so well lately can afford to be suspected a little; and we must keep in mind that with a large party the present Government has to sustain a character for *cher*-Aberdeenism, and that therefore the affectation of a little healthy political meanness may be necessary to the obtaining a power for usefulness. A little vice in a young Government, as in young men, is perhaps a good sign; and the juvenile Whig is just the

man to sow a surplusage of wild oats. Besides, when we accept a Coalition Government, we must expect only average liberalism—a “mean” result, in fact—and it is our duty, consequently, to take the Cabinet policy, as we take the Budget, “as a whole.” There is a good deal that is pleasant to balance against the police system of the perquisitioning Palmerston. We have to ask, “if under such and such circumstances Palmerston, who at least has pretensions to sustain, does so and so, what would Malmesbury have done?” Palmerston may have yielded slightly to the pressure from within—Malmesbury might have had Kossuth in Vienna by this time. We cannot compare the present Government with the possible coming men of an abstract model Cabinet: we must calculate whether they are not generally preferable to the only contingent successors. Fortunately for the Coalition, it is no longer in the melancholy position painted by Lord Derby, when he retired from office, and when he observed, that as Lord Aberdeen and he generally agreed on most points, he could not understand what practicable change of policy there was going to be: Lord Derby having relieved his old friend from the difficulty by drawing a bold line between them—by presenting a tangible distinction for the use of a public who would otherwise have remained puzzled. But Lord Derby is notoriously chivalric and good-natured; and he has done wonders in serving those who turned him out. His brisk opposition to the Canada Clergy Reserves Bill was a complete and noble self-sacrifice; for it advanced the Government incalculably in the public estimation. Lord Derby came out as the intense, bigoted, irrational, hopeless Tory; and by very force of contrast, the Ministers whom he had opposed appeared next day to the public to be zealous and even rather reckless Liberals—the Bishop of Exeter<sup>1</sup> going so far as to suggest, with a shudder, that they were Chartists—the Bishop using that sort of abuse, as Dickens’ shrew accuses her friend of being a turned-up-nose peacock—the Bishop no more believing that Lord Aberdeen is in

<sup>1</sup> Henry Philpotts.

correspondence with Cuffy<sup>1</sup> than the lady in question admitted the possibility of the ornithological phenomenon she referred to, but the Bishop, like the old lady, being determined to generalise effectively an objection. The suspicion that Ministers were not friends of the Church gratified them—the charge that they were Chartists flattered them—and Lord Granville took notes of the points, and doubtless made up his mind to make use of the accusations for the purpose of keeping Molesworth in order at the very next Council. In the same way, and for analogous reasons, we Radicals are doing the work of the Coalition by hinting our suspicions that they are rather Austrian in their tendencies: abuse in the House of Lords for their liberalism sets them up in the Commons; and abuse in the Commons for their Toryism keeps them a majority together in the Lords; so that Duncombe is played against Derby, and Walmsley against Malmesbury; and matters go on agreeably and safely in Downing Street. The results are surprising: the old Protectionist Opposition had been beaten up to last night (in pitched battles), and both in Lords and Commons, five times: in the Lords on Monday, on the Canada Clergy Reserves Bill—the fight being a regular rout; Rupert rushing as usual with his eyes shut into the midst of the enemy, and there being quietly cut down, finding that not a horseman had followed him, page Desart perhaps excepted: in the Commons this day week, Disraeli leading up the whole host in well-whipped array, on the commutation of the Debt resolutions: in the Commons, again, on Tuesday, when Protestantism was challenged to persecution by Lord Derby's intimates—Mr Napier, Mr Hamilton,<sup>2</sup> and Lord Naas:<sup>3</sup> in the Commons a second time on Tuesday, when Sir John Pakington attempted to stop the way of the Debt

<sup>1</sup> See as to Cuffy, Holyoake's *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, vol. ii. p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> George Hamilton. An Orangeman. Financial Secretary of the Treasury under Lord Derby. He died in 1871.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Naas, Chief Secretary for Ireland under Lord Derby and in subsequent Conservative Ministries. He became Earl of Mayo in 1863, and was appointed Governor-General of India in 1869. He was assassinated by a convict in 1872.



resolutions; and in the Commons again on Wednesday, when Sir Fitzroy Kelly, again with a good whip, attempted to spoil the same set of resolutions, or, as they now stand, clauses of a finance bill. The beating, observe, was not only triumphant for numbers; but because liberal principles, upheld by the Government, attacked by the Opposition, were involved: the Duke of Newcastle talking anti-State Churchism in the Lords against Lord Derby's small-minded feeble factiousness; and Sir James Graham, in replying on Tuesday to the Napiers and Hamiltons, and the dominant bigots who hold the Castle of Dublin against the people of Ireland, speaking a speech that might have been prepared by Mr Keogh—its text the right of the Catholics of Ireland to the first consideration in all State questions about the education of Ireland. Lord Derby gave the opportunity for these two tentative appeals to public opinion; and Lord Derby so destroyed himself. Where are his "310," "undoubtedly the majority of the House of Commons," now? Where is his "unquestionable majority" in the House of Lords? His own position is the contemptible one of an ally of a Bishop of Exeter on a colonial question, and of a Napier and a Whiteside (crack representatives of the old race of malignant Orangemen for whose sake so long Catholic Ireland was crushed by England) on *the* question of Ireland. And Mr Disraeli's position is little better than that of a querulous ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer finding fidgety fault with a financial scheme he cannot alter. And the party's general position is ludicrously uneasy, digesting the dirt eaten at Lord Derby's bidding, and trying to look easy while Mr Mackenzie or Mr Bateson<sup>1</sup> assures it that Mr Disraeli is up early and late looking out for a policy.

Taking that general view, I repeat, then, Ministers have got so much strength, that they can afford a little suspicion, and such an air of liberalism, that a little dash of the reactionary Tory, at the hands of Lord Palmerston, became indispensable to the equilibrium in the legislature which it is the function of a coalition to preserve. The

<sup>1</sup> M. P. for Londonderry.



leaven of Molesworth in colonial, and of Keogh in Irish policy, and of Osborne and Villiers in commercial policy, were becoming too traceable in the general mass of measures; and a week or two of "sound Conservatism" becomes decidedly advisable. Otherwise we might get Mr Miall or Mr Lucas rising to ask Lord John Russell "whether, as the Government is so strongly of opinion (*teste* Canada Clergy Reserves) that a church can have no corporate property, and that the majority of a people is entitled to decide on the endowments of a church, it is the intention of Her Majesty's Ministers to take the sense of Parliament on the present State establishment of the Anglican Church in England and Ireland; and if not, whether it is because Her Majesty's Ministers have not that confidence in the justice and considerateness of the people of Great Britain, which they profess to have in the people of Canada. The question would be logical; and the House would laugh; and Ministers would look serious. They must avoid such dilemmas. They must not allow publicists to forget that this is a coalition age, and that a coalition Government must appreciate the age. Liberalism to-day, then; Toryism to-morrow: Radicalism when the Queen gives up commanding Sir Wm. Molesworth to dine with her—for how can a man talk Benthamism, and then face a Queen who *will* read all the papers? Couldn't be done, sir; and that's well understood in conscious tap-rooms in the Borough. The three nights' discussion on the Budget has been not a debate, but a *levée*—a reception by Mr Gladstone. About thirty or forty men have spoken, and not three have condemned. Member after member has gone up smiling to the august and complacent Chancellor of the Exchequer, oratorically kissed the hand which had gone so deep into the cornucopia which he keeps in his red box, and been rewarded with the nod which, when it comes from an official to an "independent" member is proverbially sufficing. Lord John may not have liked all that homage to his right honourable friend: however rejoicing that the Government had made a hit, he would have liked—jealous of his dignity as unde-

partmented leader—a man with a mission not addressed and lying in Downing Street “till called for”—that the acknowledgments should have been general to the Cabinet, and not so distinctly personal and grateful to an individual who, before his success, suspected that Lord John Russell, as amateur pilot, was *de trop* in a calm, among a crew coalesced on the comprehensive basis of administrative ability. Sir C. Wood may not have liked the overwhelming contrasts candidly thrust on his attention between this Budget and *his* beggars’ wallets. The Whigs, generally, are not pleased that the *coup*, on which all depended, should have been made by the Peelite portion of the Ministry, and that Mr Gladstone himself should so prominently present the Cabinet as taking up the work of Sir Robert Peel—a connection in following which the Whig element and interregnum between Peel in 1842, and Gladstone in 1853, are likely to be overlooked. But Mr Gladstone is revelling in his own proper fame; talks exultingly—he treated poor Pakington, on Tuesday, as Pakington would have treated, say Chisholm Anstey—and, generally, is in such superb good humour that he is half inclined to add a million or two of his private fortune to swell the surplus, and, at anyrate, is supposed to be ready to get rid of all the grumbling by altering the licences grievance, and by giving the Radicals what they want about the newspaper taxes. That is the least concession he could make for so much complimenting as he has been the recipient of since the beginning of this week; and he will increase the amount of the gift, by the good grace with which he will confess an error. Apelles consented to alter the shoe of the Venus. In such a beauty of a Budget, little defects may be allowed by a consummate artist. But a bad Budget gives good debates; a good Budget has entailed on a dull public unenlivening discussions. The monotonous admiration of the House has been like the invariable Oh—h—h’s of the crowd, wondering at the Vauxhall pyrotechnic tableaux; and Burkes dittoing one another, make the strangers’ galleries unexciting. The certain success of the Budget was so

accurately foreseen, that a heavy debate was made still heavier, by the absence of the chances of a struggle; and up to this moment no man of great mark has spoken. Even among the small men, there was little competition for the maltreating of the Speaker's eye; and the House has consisted only of the said few small men, who would speak, and who were obliged to wait listening to one another, till their turns came round. This is an observable Parliamentary maxim—when a Government is safe, the smoking-room fills; when a Budget has only to be puffed, its details are gone into over a cigar. The influence of the House of Commons' smoking-room upon British history, has never been sufficiently recognised, and must be discussed some day. It is the green room of the Legislative stage; and this week, its attractiveness, as a mart for gossiping, appears to have kept the House empty. (Constituents should look to this, in Sir C. Barry's bills—the smoking-room is the most luxuriant in the whole building.) Sir Edward Lytton had an audience at the start of the debate—getting a crowd for the very reasons which filled Drury Lane, to see Edmund Kean, as harlequin; for who is not curious to see the artistic novelist as the farmer's friend? Ernest Maltravers bringing himself down to the Sir John Tyrrel level—Pelham affecting the Henley?<sup>1</sup> But Sir Edward does it well; he *is* awfully dull, and prosed so well that one really believes he *was* mistaken in that estimate of himself which he gave in the preface to "Arthur."<sup>2</sup> He makes some cad say to the broken-down *roué*, in the Cider Cellars' scene in *Pelham*,—"Well, it's an odd history; and I'd never have thought you'd been a gentleman."<sup>3</sup> On Monday nobody would have thought Sir Edward had come from the clever classes into the country gentlemen set; and you may, therefore, imagine his success. The Protectionists cheered him heartily, and began to

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Warner Henley, M.P. for Oxfordshire, President of the Board of Trade under Lord Derby. He was remarkable for plain common-sense and clear insight into business. He retired from Parliament in 1878 and died in 1884.

<sup>2</sup> Bulwer Lytton's poem of "King Arthur," published in 1849.

<sup>3</sup> This seems a misquotation.

wonder if he might not do nearly as well as Pakington for a leader. And, in its way, that was a House of Commons triumph, no doubt; and you would have thought it a great one, to see the air of Maltravers as he went up to the stenographers, anxiously hoping that they had heard him well! Yet there was something wanting in the triumph; for a good speech for a farmer's friend is hardly a good speech for the author of *England and the English*; <sup>1</sup> and the only tolerable matter was, at anyrate, spoiled by the intolerable manner. Sir Edward appears to have no musical ear, and his sentences rise and fall about in an unmodulated way, that teases and perplexes, all the more that he is so slow and straggling; and what chiefly does not please in him is, that it is so evident the eye is turned inwards—that he is not addressing the House, but speaking a prepared speech, which he thinks wonderfully profound, and desires to make impressive—a consideration which the collective House never appreciates. Listen to him they did, for they listen to most openers of a debate; and there was curiosity to see a clever man in a new position; but how dead the real failure was may be inferred from the fact that Sir Edward gave no text or tone to the debate, that he produced no impression out of doors, and that when his voice ceased his speech was dead, no reference of any consequence being made to it in the rest of the discussion, and certainly no one specifically answering it. Sir Edward of course can become a leading man in the House of Commons, if he likes; if he studies it, and consults its tastes and necessities—as he did not when there ten years ago and as he has not done since returned last—he can command and control it equally with other clever men with a capacity to understand mankind; but the very freshest youth in the place has not more to learn, to fit himself for that assembly, than Sir Edward has to unlearn. First of all, the unreality of his point of view—talking talk which, however good, is not quite certain to tell; and in the next place, the utter artificiality of his manner. The House will not be spoken at: it will be talked to.

<sup>1</sup> A portraiture of England and the English in 1833.

There are men, however, who are unable, whatever their practice, to get the House of Commonsknack. Read the speech of Mr Cobden, who re-opened the debate on Thursday, and you will see how admirable is its matter and its arrangement; one of those crystal clear speeches which are peculiar to himself; and yet that speech did not tell on the House, and for the simple reason that it was not addressed to the House, but to the West Riding. Mr Cobden is the agitator, even in presence of Mr Speaker, and always looks and talks like a representative of the pressure from without—the thin end of the celebrated wedge *in* bodily. Mr Cobden has spoken twenty times per session ever since 1841, and he has not yet a notion how to catch the ear of the audience best worth having of all the audiences in the world. Beyond the walls he sees and hears a middle-class meeting; and he talks at that with a great earnestness and a vast command of his subject, which get the intermediary attention—but with a carelessness for the opinions and feelings he is in presence of that makes him a decidedly unpopular man at Westminster. See how he insulted the Irish Liberal members on Thursday—an insult which Serjeant Shee<sup>1</sup> forcibly retorted for them—upon no provocation whatever, and merely from a sensation that the “point” would have told capitally in a free-trade hall in England. Take, as a further comfort for Sir Edward Bulwer, Mr Moore’s speech last night. Mr Moore, also, will not consult House of Commons peculiarities, and gets no real position in consequence. A clever man, full of thought and very fluent, he *will* say what he thinks, in the way it came on to the paper with which he prepared himself; and the result is smart declamation in a harsh Mayo brogue, which can have no visible effect on men or parties—which is mere mental enjoyment of the orator’s—and to which nobody pays any attention; certainly not the English members, who fancy Moore is doing what Cobden does, talking to out of doors; whereas G. H. Moore is earnestly,

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Kilkenny. He lost his seat in 1857, was appointed a judge in 1864, and died in 1868.



rapturously and contentedly talking to himself. Then there is a third instance worth noticing, that of Sir Francis Baring,<sup>1</sup> who made a speech on Thursday which excited great talk, consisting for the most part of angry condemnation. Sir Francis, a Whig of established crotchettiness, was First Admiralty Lord under the late Government, was Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Melbourne, and is supposed to possess "administrative ability," which may be defined as a habit of early rising, bringing you to your office at nine, agreeing with your clerks in everything, being in the House precisely at half-past four P.M., being never well dressed, and always able to bully independent members when they happen to catch your clerks in a mess. Now Sir Francis, on Thursday, was worse than Cobden, worse than Moore; he did not talk to meetings nor to Lady Baring, but he made a speech for the purpose of causing some malicious pleasure to about six personages, they being the statesmen left out of the coalition,—Earl Grey, Sir George Grey, Labouchere, Goulburn, and some few more: who don't agree with you that the coalition can get on, and who think that it is great nonsense to be praising the Budget in this way,—who allow that Gladstone is rather clever, but then he's copied my idea about &c., &c.; and who were delighted at Sir Francis's moral courage (I notice that your crack honest and moral-courage men have always bad expressions in their face and ill-condition in their voices) in telling Gladstone that he had blundered about Ireland. The statesmen left out,—Sir George, and Labouchere, and Goulburn, present, did not cheer, but they were rewarded by Hayter's uneasiness, Lord John's gloom, and Mr Gladstone's extra hilarity; and they thought more meanly than ever of the Irish members who cheered, and who, poor innocents, thought Sir Francis was trying to please *them*—as if Sir Francis cared one straw for Ireland. But then the House saw through all this, detected the spite of

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Portsmouth until 1865. He became Lord Northbrook in 1866 and died in the same year. He held various offices, the last being that of First Lord of the Admiralty.



a disappointed man, and arranged to enjoy the next moral-courage speaker who should tell the secret. Who was Mr Cardwell. A gentleman never hesitating at ill-natured things, and not a Whig associate, and who insinuated a telling reply to the sneering assailant; adding an assault on Mr Moore, which was less well taken; and, in fact, accepting what appeared an inevitable necessity, and turning the whole of the further talk for the night into an Irish debate—on the old question, under a new aspect, of justice to Ireland—under which infliction no opposition was made to the further adjournment of the division until Monday. Throughout the whole of last evening, though the attendance was fuller than before, the speaking was tame, the Protectionists launching no heavier orator than Mr Henley; and Government loosing no more responsible talker than the Mr Cardwell aforesaid—smart and accurate on facts before him, and useful to be thrown out in a debate as a Government picquet; the Independent interest proffering no more important person than Mr Cairns<sup>1</sup>—a fluent Chancery barrister, who talked for an Irish constituency, and by personal allusions, rapid attacks on always assailable Sir Charles Wood (who had spoken on the preceding day), point being given to flimsy material by the satisfied and easy air of the speaker:—this gentleman—who was elaborately got up, dressed for the occasion as a dandy orator, to produce an effect—did manage to get up running cheers, and to sit down in a roar of Protectionist applause, completing a “hit” in the House. But this was at midnight, when seats were full, in readiness for the possibility of Disraeli and division. Up to the last half-hour of Mr Cairns,<sup>1</sup> the House was thin, and teasingly inattentive; a promenade and a club lounge rather than a legislative assembly; the fact being, that up to ten, members were as much in the Lords, watching the Jew Bill debate, as in their own place; and that from ten to eleven they could do nothing but buzz in and out their wonder and their comment upon the Government defeat.

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Earl Cairns, the famous Lord Chancellor. He died in 1885.

Looking down from the galleries at about ten, you could see there was some sensation outside, utterly disconnected from the orator inside, who was hammering away about differentiation, and lifting his voice over all the insulting hum and bustle to the reporters. There was news brought in by honourable newsmongers in hot haste, whispered about at the bar, and then radiated right and left, and up and down the House. Lord John and Mr Disraeli had their eyes on the news at the one moment; they got at it at about the same moment. Lord John knew that his colleague, Rothschild, had been rejected again by the Peers; and Lord John drew his hat over his head, tightened his arms round his chest, and talked reservedly with Graham. Mr Disraeli, then supposed to be about to rise at eleven, and in his capacity as leader of the country gentleman and Protestant opposition—knew that his race and religion had received a new insult from the party which he was serving—simply because the conscientious House of Lords would not unchristianise the House of Commons. Was it fancy? But Mr Disraeli did *not* appear to catch Lord John's eye for the rest of the night.

In the hurry, it was concluded that Government was damaged by the defeat; but really, the coalition had got a victory, as on the Canada Clergy Reserves Bill, because new material was thus supplied to them for taking airs as civil and religious liberty champions. They would have preferred winning; but the next best thing was that Lord Derby should win, since he would win everything *but* honour. Personally, Lord Aberdeen cannot regret the debate. It was the first opportunity he had had of manifesting the later enlarged liberalism of his nature; and his bold declaration of regret for past intolerance was a noble thing in the old man, and pleasant hearing for the droves of Jew gentlemen who were packed in the strangers' gallery, staring at the peeresses, and admiring the disinterestedness of the Peers in charging nothing at the doors for admission. Ministers have also consolation in knowing that all the good speaking was on their side; and

all rational men have reason to rejoice that Archbishop Whately<sup>1</sup> so astounded the right reverend bench by meeting the charge about unchristianising the Legislature with the direct, candid insinuation—which no one had yet made in any of these debates—"Your House of Commons is not Christian now—one half of them are Deists." What was to be said after that? Nothing; and I believe that startling truth petrified at least a dozen intending Christian orators, and brought the debate to an abrupt and early close. Fancy Dr Johnson an Archbishop, and in a debate, and saying that, and you can get an exact notion of how Dr Whately looked and said it—rolling about in a bilious passion—and utterly indifferent to the horror he was raising behind him among the scrupulous shepherds, shocked at the licence assumed by the huge and intellectual vulgarian who was staggering about the table and suggesting the most overwhelming logic, based on the most cruel admissions of constitutional shams. Such a saying as Dr Whately's would have evoked a twenty minutes' roar and cheers in the Commons: in the Lords there was solemn silence—they didn't know there how to manage an indiscretion of this sort. They had enjoyed previously the jolly and loosely-Christian suggestiveness of the wild Albemarle,<sup>2</sup> who played round his subject, and cracked good jokes, and conciliated the Puritanical Peers by admitting that he was in favour of the principle and all that sort of thing, but that he really was as averse as Falstaff to contiguity with the Ebrew Jew. This was talk the ladies liked—those ladies who always go to the Lords on no-opera nights—who add the rustle of silk to the solemnities of politics; who chatter to one another, and nod and beck amusingly and knowingly to their lords in the den below, and who have that influence on the oratory which private boxes have on the acting at the theatre above half-price. Lord Shaftesbury,<sup>3</sup> fanatically solemn, they said, no doubt,

<sup>1</sup> Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin. He died in 1863.

<sup>2</sup> Earl of Albemarle. He died in 1891. He wrote among other works *Fifty Years of my Life*.

<sup>3</sup> The well-known philanthropist. He died in 1885.

was very impressive. The Bishop of Salisbury,<sup>1</sup> inanely twaddling, they could not but regard as gentlemanly—the least a bishop could be—and Lord Darnley,<sup>2</sup> who made a maiden speech, and broke down in his idiotic bigotry in a way to suggest that out of his earldom he would have a difficulty in earning his livelihood, except on the recommendation of Lord Shaftesbury to the communistic Blacking Brigade, they could not but conclude to be diffident; and Lord Albemarle, as mentioned, they giggled at in a way to delight and inspire into tedious stupidity that plethoric peer. All these lords had talked, not at their lordships, but, in the first place, at the bishops; and in the next place, at the ladies; going in at once for Christianity and fashion—a place in heaven and a pleasant reputation in May Fair. But Lord Brougham, who not only talked to the ladies, but did not condescend to look at the lords, and who would as soon touch a bishop as a Manchester man—what could the peeresses have thought of Lord Brougham? First, of his dress—a sort of Cannes blouse—surmounted by a woman's boa; next, of his voice—a raucous yell; of his gesture, maniacal banging of the table? He was attempting to fascinate the side galleries; he terrified them, so that the pink bonnets were thinned long before he had done. Lord Brougham has been seen in many phases before; but so startling, so bewildering was he last night, that one began to think that the Lords were having *their* turn of a lunatic, even less manageable than O'Connor was—with a decidedly louder voice, and more method. What with Whately, Albemarle, and Brougham, against him, and on his own side nobody better than a Bishop of Salisbury and a foundered young Earl, the debate may have appeared to Lord Derby, as well as to Lord Lyndhurst,<sup>3</sup> both of whom had been calculated upon, too ludicrous, and too trivial, and too troublesome for their control. At anyrate, they allowed the House to rush from Brougham to a division. Their silence in the debate, and the rumours current for the few days beforehand, to the

<sup>1</sup> Edward Denison.

<sup>2</sup> An Irish peer.

<sup>3</sup> Formerly Lord Chancellor.

effect that they intended changing their votes, and turning Liberals, suggest a conspiracy to entrap Ministers: and this is certain—that a Whig Minister said positively at eight o'clock that the Government was safe to win. The vote that Lord Stanley gave for the bill in the Commons, implies that Lord Derby was not indisposed to a decent inconsistency; but it may be, that he felt the Government was getting on too well, and that a little check to them was necessary to restore his own temper. So Lord Derby passed the word for bigotry, and will attend St James's Church to-morrow with a clear conscience. And he and Mr Disraeli will dine together in the evening as usual; and will calculate what is best to be done with an enlightened country.

## CHAPTER XIII

Parliamentary Corruption—Duffy and Keogh—The Political Refugees

*May 7.*

EVERY house has its skeleton. The house of Commons has two—Messrs Drummond and Duffy: and they have somewhat affected the feast of reason at Westminster during the week.

It is a week to be memorable in the history of representative institutions. The session is a session of one subject: the dead failure of the Reform Bill—the startling sham of the Constitution: and this week sees the climax of the hideous series of revolutions. The exposures have been in formal and symmetrical succession. The Election Committees led up to the trial of Stafford—is there no painter equal to the perception that Lord Derby's agent is as good a subject as Charles's Strafford?—and the trial of Stafford led up to Mr Drummond's speech on Tuesday—and Mr Drummond's speech was the suggestion of Mr Duffy's speech on Thursday. A habit was growing up among public men of facing the facts; and is it surprising that Mr Duffy, an "inexperienced member," as Lord Palmerston benevolently observed, should have got unconsciously in the way of telling the truth of the political scamps honoured by the constituencies of his enlightened country? How is it, then, that notwithstanding the House has been a confessional since Christmas, there was this sudden revulsion on Thursday, and that, at eleven o'clock on Thursday night, the Speaker was under the necessity of trying to remember the precedents, from Wilkes down-



wards, of "expulsion?" On Tuesday, the House chuckled over Mr Drummond, who called it a Bazaar of places, and emphatically pronounced every forensic M.P. a place-hunter,—who also went up to the House of Lords and compared the Ministerial benches there to a draper's counter, over which ribbons were sold and conscience given in exchange. Why was Mr Drummond laughed with? and Mr Duffy, who hinted at only half-a-dozen cases of corruption, yelled at? The reason appears to be this: that Mr Drummond talked like a man of the world, as "one of us," and acknowledged the necessity of corruption in this leading nation of Europe: and that Mr Duffy talked like an indignant purist, who was earnestly scornful of Mr Drummond's inevitable scamps. The House will endure its weakness being hinted at by one of the club who affects no superiority; but—appearances must be kept up—they even thought Drummond indiscreet with a nest worth preservation, and they would not endure a moralist who will not amalgamate with the club—who thinks of a country behind him; and who will go on stupidly believing in the political honesty of needy Irish barristers. Observe that the House does not acknowledge that because its origin is rotten and villainous, it is therefore itself impure: the theory to be sustained is that constituencies are bought always, but never sold. The country, it admits—cheering Vernon Smith and Labouchere—is an unworthy and dishonest country; but the six hundred and fifty-four, who purchase the Government of their countrymen, are all honourable men, patriotic (it is their own, their native land after all) and pure to that extent that even Mr Murrough is to be presented to the public gaze as rather a Bayard than otherwise. Mr Stafford had sold Britannia, no doubt concluding that a Tory could rule the seas as straight as a Whig; but Mr Stafford's personal honour was "unimpeached." What could we do without these theories? Admit all the facts, and what would become of this highly-civilised people? Colonel Dickson thinks that every man goes to Parliament for an "object," but if

every man did not insist that his sole aim was to make mankind happier and better, how could mankind be managed? You don't suppose British citizens would be so proud of self-government, and the right to put what price they like on their franchises, if the honourable candidate on presenting himself was to say, "Being a member of the aristocracy, I must belong to the best club in London, will you oblige me?" Or, "Being in the navy, I want a ship or a squadron—will you give me the means of getting at the Admiralty and screwing it out of that infernal First Lord who snubs me now?" Or, "Being a barrister, liking Cockburn's<sup>1</sup> society, and consequently never reading law, and consequently not making a thousand a year, I should like some of the pleasant places in my profession. I am of seven years' standing—pray help a rising man." Or, "Being a British merchant, with a good fortune and nothing to do, I'd like to be able to awe my wife and Snooks of the city—reward industry, and give me a seat." All this is to be said to one another in the club; but the exoteric faith of the multitude must be looked after, and Duffy must be put down. Concede that we have not progressed since Walpole's days, and the constitution would break down. And look at the state of continental Europe, sir, since 1848—do you want this glorious country to be brought to anarchy? Would you unchristianise us by admitting a Jew? asks Mr Walpole in the hearing of Mr Disraeli, with his eye on Mr Ricardo:<sup>2</sup> and we laugh outside: but that laugh must not be sanctioned inside. A Marquis of Waterford and a Marquis of Salisbury<sup>3</sup> vote against unchristianising the Legislature: but who dare test the right of such men to give such votes? Mr Crocodile, the rising barrister, comes from the Reform Club, where he has discussed over claret with Cockburn the chances about that £200 a year at that

<sup>1</sup> Sir Alexander Cockburn, M.P. for Southampton, and Attorney-General. He afterwards became Lord Chief-Justice and died in 1880.

<sup>2</sup> John Lewis Ricardo (the nephew of David Ricardo), M.P. for Stoke. He died in 1862.

<sup>3</sup> The grandfather of the present Marquis.

board, or about that compact judgeship at Bombay, and with his fine voice and practised style, he produces a great effect,—you can hear the ladies in their cage exclaim, “What a beautiful speaker!” when he points out that the borough of Vendor ought to have a commission (he could tell Hayter just the men for the commissioners) to inquire into the villainy of one Tomkins, whose wife having received a threat from the landlord about those arrears, found £10 in her purse on the nomination day. The constituency of this country, says Vernon Smith, is utterly depraved; and then Vernon Smith walks home wondering why the deuce he was forgotten in the coalition, and how he could manage to hurry Sidney Herbert into the Peerage? The idea, said Mr Fitzgerald,<sup>1</sup> of my being under any prospective obligation to the Government! Mr Fitzgerald gives up a good practice at the bar, simply to oblige his countrymen; and Mr F. Scully<sup>2</sup> is there, in his place, night after night, ruining that narrow chest of his, and trying to take an interest in a subject of which he has not the dreariest comprehension, simply because he loves Tipperary; and that devotion is all the more noble, that Tipperary has given him a broad hint that his resignation would be very acceptable. The idea, again, as Lord John Russell hinted last night, of my honourable and learned friend, Mr Keogh, thinking of the salary attached to his office. Insulting proposition! But, perhaps, as being a Minister without office, Lord John can affect indignation at the notion of meaning anything but patriotism—his indignation on Thursday boiling over to that extent that one instinctively looked to see if Lord Charles Russell, with all the dignity of £2500 a year, was going to rush at Mr Duffy. Yes; we *have* improved since the days of Walpole. Lord John Russell, volunteer statesman, leads that pure assembly for nothing. Mr Gladstone is sorry that he should be so disinterested: but it is a corrupt age, and we want men to go in front—as veneer-statesmen. Properly considered, Lord John helps appearances wonderfully—*Que l'inutile est beau!*

<sup>1</sup> J. D. Fitzgerald, M.P. for Sussex.

<sup>2</sup> F. Scully, M.P. for Tipperary.

The scene of Thursday night was something worth noting and remembering. The row in 1846, between Peel and Disraeli, when Peel said, "That is not true," was very good indeed ; but, then, Disraeli was being hounded on by an enraged faction, party spirit ran fiercely high, and there was some solemnity that made one look grave while the savagery was in progress. But on Thursday, for the first hour, it was sheer fun: we have got into careless times ; and it was late when the House was full of dined white waistcoats and red faces ; and those insulted were not a class much cared for, while the insulter was not personally known to twenty men there. The House gave itself up to the fracas with a thorough sense of enjoyment—utterly reckless of the agony to individuals, and utterly indifferent, in the thoughtlessness of the moment, to the results on its own reputation. It shammed the virtuous indignation with great zest, and took for granted, while yelling and gesticulating, that the pale and "green" Mr Duffy, after providing a proper supply of fun, would duly be bullied into peccavi. Earnest and serious it got at the last, when the dogged victim would palpably push the matter to extremity ; for even the dined were cunning enough to remember that the House of Commons of this glorious constitution could not very well afford the *exposé* just now ; but until this sort of sensation supervened, honourable gentlemen revelled in the rumpus just like gallery gods in an O. P. scrimmage. The House of Commons is the best place in the world for confusion—for a row. Far better than a public meeting : for there it is only a column—the "body" of the meeting—rushing at a fort—the platform. The platform sees a long-drawn-out row immediately before it, and can manage it by managing the foremost assaulters. But the House of Commons has two sides : roars can be exchanged ; men can be marked out ; eye is upon eye ; and there may be a gesticulating *mêlée* of hand-to-hand combats. And a public meeting cannot venture on such shouts as members of the House of Commons. Catcalls were introduced for the first time on Thursday since 1832 ; fists were shaken

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at faces for the first time in Commons history; and at one moment J. Ball<sup>1</sup> and V. Scully, who rose at the same time to be cloud-compellers of the tempest, were wrestling for the precedence—V. Scully, as the lighter weight, going down ignominiously in a hideous screech of universal laughter. A stenographic corps of the “Fonetic Nuz” might have taken the cries—ordinary reporting was useless. The dined, who had got in in the middle of the crowded hubbub, were obliged to skulk to back benches, and into the galleries; and they set to, one after another, imprompting at Donnybrook. And it should be understood that the dined were only the outer chorus. Grave, steady, sober men were fuming and screaming, frantically cheering Russell, madly putting down Lucas, and actually yelling at Duffy. That “intelligent foreigner” with whom we so often illustrate our home pictures, could only have come to one conclusion from such a scene—that the House was drunk, and that they were ordering Mr Chairman Bouverie<sup>2</sup> to lie on the table. In the end, when it got reasonable, and knew, by Serjeant Shee’s speech, that it had blundered, it behaved justly in adjourning the whole discussion; for it is the fairest assembly in the world, full of manliness; but for an hour the collective conduct of the House was scandalous; at once exceeding its sham of indignation and forgetting decency in its laughter. At one moment anything insulting to Duffy would have been cheered—the most frightful personalities would have been welcomed,—and, though it repented the blackguardism, when Duffy remonstrated, it did cheer Mr —, who was in a white waistcoat, when he was mean enough and cowardly enough to attempt a kick at a “down” man, by his declaration of opinion, that because he would not apologise, Mr Duffy was a—a—“I don’t wish (with a lurch) to use an improper expression (grasping the rail of his seat) but not a—a—gennemelan.” The House would have it that Duffy had no grounds for his charge; and because he would not retract, they would have it that he

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Carlow.

<sup>2</sup> E. P. Bouverie, M.P. for Kilmarnock, Chairman of Committee.



wanted manliness—as if the greater pluck were not in bearding all the sham. Lord John Russell was undoubtedly responsible for the scene, and behaved badly. How Lord John Russell has degenerated—how assiduously he is practising mildness for the House of Lords, where he is soon to be called let us hope—was evidenced early in the evening by his speech on Kossuth, condemning Kossuth because he would conspire, and *not* twirl his thumbs in the Bayswater Hospitium: and how completely incapable he now is of “leading” a great body like the Commons, he sufficiently showed in his leaving the row to continue and complicate itself during two hours of shouts and screams, and in himself adopting the tone of insult to Mr Duffy, who, as Mr Disraeli, more cool and more vigorous, said, was only exercising his highest right as a member by arraigning the corruption of a Government. Lord John, an elbow in each hand,—his favourite attitude on great occasions, as when he is on “civil and religious liberty,”—lifted the smallest of human voices to catch the cheers that were waiting on him—ardent cheers, such as Lord John is not used to,—and this great statesman, not, just at present, the most masculine of men, denounced Mr Duffy’s want of manliness. And how the bullying House, insisting on its purity, did thunder applause of that moral lecture; Lord Palmerston, in the same way, assumed Mr Duffy to be in a mess, and advised him, as Mentor would talk to Telemachus, if Telemachus had been a member and had been disorderly; and the House roared at that too,—thinking Palmerston sagacious and diplomatic, and considering Duffy d—d if he would not fall into the trap. The impertinence of the fellow!—why would he not please them? They could not even laugh at him: he behaved faultlessly, with miraculous self-possession: and it was fine to observe that, after all, the mass of members would not allow him to be crushed by the furious few whom he had summoned up for judgment. It was a tellingly trying thing for his nerves when shown the door: for there was something ludicrous in that episode: but he escaped a jeer even then—he walked from his place as sedately and



strollingly as if he had just presented a petition, as if nobody was looking at him. Brave men are always quiet men; and he was subdued, but solemnly obstinate; and that demeanour had its effect in the end. Who could have gone through such a scene and not blundered? You, Jones,—fancy yourself the centre of twelve hundred eyes, and the focus of six hundred voices,—would you not have given in and given way? But this young member, on Thursday, did not commit a single blunder (that is, after the first indiscretion of provoking such an affair at all); and there must be elements of greatness in the man who, with few advantages and many disadvantages, could escape from such an *auto da fè*. His withdrawing was a great piece of good fortune; the tide turned for an absent man; and members were at once stunned by the gallant defensive speech made by Serjeant Shee for his friend, and softened by his appeal to their sympathies. He is a fine, vigorous, vulgar fellow, that Serjeant Shee; and the brain and the manhood he evinced in his fifteen minutes' talk should have shamed the melodramatic Russell. He ended the row, and gave a turn to the view of the House, which put Mr Duffy in a steady position for his appearance next day.

It was the morning after: a headache in the aspect of the again thronged and expectant House—repentance on the Treasury benches—a sense of shame universal. In effect, the result was that Lord John Russell confessed to have been too virtuously hasty; that the House, in agreeing to Lord John's "least said soonest mended" proposition to pass to business, owned to have been grossly wrong; and that Mr Duffy, the inexperienced man everybody had been advising or insulting the night before—stuck to his point, and became a hero for ever in Ireland. He reiterated his charges, generalising the meaning, and offered to particularise individuals, if it was wished; and he gave his clear-headed account of the point at issue in so modest but so firm a way, that there was no longer a chance of doubting the correctness of his accusation—he convinced in advance. "Well," said Lord John, elbows in hands

again, "if you only mean that certain Irish members of this Government forswore themselves in taking office with me, you only say what is matter of argument, and let us argue it in due opportunity." There was a soda-watery cheer. Mr J. Ball, with a *delirium tremens* host of Irish members around him, agreed with Lord John, if Mr Duffy only referred to the deserters from the Brigade to the Coalition Ministry, why that was not his business, nor the business of his friends (mournful, nervous "Hear, hear's"); and he would leave the reply to the circumscribed charge to those whom it concerned. "Hear, hear," from everybody. But the same thought occurred at the same time to everybody, and every eye was turned on the full, healthy, reckless face of a stout little man on the Treasury benches, noted as an intellectual sparrer. As Lord John and as Mr Ball turned the matter, Mr Keogh was placed in the dock as a man accused of political corruption. But Mr Keogh sat still. The House understood it all, broke up laughing and radiated away to dinner, to wonder with one another what the country would think of it all; what Duffy's case really was; and whether Hayter had frightened Lord John not to push the difficulty into a committee-room. Lord John went out and chatted with Lord Clarendon, perhaps about that young rebel journalist they had tried so hard, in '48, to get out to Van Dieman's Land, and who was now a power in his "place"—talking his sanguine theories and foolish indignation, and utterly upsetting all the old routine arrangements by which Irish members have so long been kept as Treasury-runners and the scoffs of good society. Yet Lord John had still kept up appearances with his usual perseverance; and may to-day, out at Richmond, bask in the consciousness that he has done his duty during the week to the Constitution. His vote on Tuesday for the prosecution of Sir F. Smith,<sup>1</sup> he followed up last night by a notice of a Bill to disqualify all Government employés in dockyards for the franchise; and the en-

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Chatham. He was unseated in 1853, but was returned again for the borough in 1857, and continued to sit for it until 1868. He died in 1874.

lightened Ministerial benches welcomed that notice with a sort of hear, hear, which meant—Bravo—Here's a pure Minister—Mark that, you corrupt Tory gentlemen! And no doubt Lord John is behaving with great moral courage: his countrymen with Government patronage cannot be trusted, so he disfranchises them. There's a fine moral in the notice for a highly-civilised people; but is it not odd that it should be applied by the great "Reformer"? A Reform Bill is due: and Lord John brings in a measure of disfranchisement! If in dockyards, because the men can't be honest, why not in boroughs, where they don't choose to be? The Radicals were delighted with the notice last night, but the principle is a new one; and if they establish a precedent, they can hardly be disappointed when Lord John rises, April 1, 1854, elbows in his hands, to complete the great work of his life, and says, "Sir, the period has now arrived when we may put the corner-stone to the work we Whigs commenced in 1791, and when, sir, we may propose the complete abandonment of the representative system." (Loud cheers.) And it is notorious that Lord John is only waiting for his great Reform Bill to go up to the House of Lords.

The Radicals hardly seem to appreciate the course of events. The country is in the humour, after such a week, in which the word "corruption" has been heard oftener than any other word, to be led against the outrageous shams of the Constitutional organisation; and yet the Radicals only laugh when Mr Drummond speaks, and are silent when Mr Duffy is recklessly veracious. A man is now wanted to speak out the thoughts of the nation—to stifle the inanities of a Russell, and punish the roguery of a Stafford. We are drifting into terrible acknowledgments—all faith in nationality, and honour, and duty disappearing; and the opportunity has come for a great man to grasp the real leadership of a shameless Parliament. Lord John Russell conceives, that though all the rest is rotten—from the Keoghs in the House to the Tomkinsons in the boroughs—he and his kind hold their heads and breathe fresh air above the ocean of filth in which the pilotage is

facile—to stick: with majorities of 70 and 100 “in favour of.” But there is another sort of corruption at work which is creeping round them, and sapping the manhood of Englishmen. The confessions of the two Ministers on Thursday about the refugees were dastardly: and even if England can afford and tolerate the disgrace of a police system, admitted to exist by the Home Secretary, justified by the volunteer statesman, at least England cannot desire that her governors should be silly—and silliness is the characteristic of this fidgety feeble effort to entrap refugees into offences against dead laws. Lord Palmerston looked meanly—was mean. Lord John, loftily inane, was a governor of the British Empire twaddling. We live so much in routine that such words astound and shock when connected with the names of men of prominence and position. But it was impossible not to feel, watching the interpellations on Tuesday, that England had forgotten herself in her anxiety about budgets and emigration, to endure such men talking in such wise. The degradation was but insufficiently redeemed by the gallant conduct of the little Saxon group of Bright and Cobden, Walmsley and Stuart;<sup>1</sup> they said much, but not enough, nor what they said strongly enough; and they spoke to a thin House, disposed to take for granted that two great Ministers could not be blundering. Mr Bright spoke with noble impressiveness; and Mr Cobden with his usual courage—this time happily directed—effectually prevented the too-dexterous Palmerston from quibbling away a painful fact. But Mr Bright may be assured that, just now, the House of Commons is not to be managed by etiquette: and that the people would bear and back him in the truth. He contrasted the visits of the Orleans family to Windsor with the visits of the police to Kossuth; he may connect them.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Dudley Stuart, M.P. for Marylebone. An enthusiastic advocate of the independence of Poland. He died in 1854.

## CHAPTER XIV

### The Irish Members—The Ballot

*May 14.*

WHAT should we do without the Irish members? The monotony of Budget debates would be intolerable without the Irish members. English members can misconduct themselves on proper provocation; but we should have no provocations were there no Irish members. Could Pitt have thought of this when he was petting Castlereagh into passing the Union? At anyrate the reflection is universal at present; and though we affect indignation at the recurring rows—as if we were devoted to public business, and never thought of the House of Commons as our principal public amusement—we have, all of us, during the week, been exceedingly obliged to those Celtic gentlemen who have made “a holy show” of themselves, after the manner of their race, in the Imperial Senate.

There were some fears at the general election, that a grave, sedate, business-like, and honourable set of men were about to be presented to Parliament as the “Irish party”; but the experience of the fortnight has manifested the groundlessness of those apprehensions. It is gratifying to discover, taking the public amusement view of public affairs, that the Irish members are as silly, as broguey, as useless, as quarrelsome, and as contemptible as ever they were. That is, in the mass; the exceptions are conspicuous, and need no particularisation: they are to be found in the little confederation for pure but perhaps *too* national purposes—the “Irish party”—a party, despite all desertions, still left. And as this is the exact character of the general Irish representation, is it not most



insane to entertain any hopes of them, as a manageable confederation, for combination purposes, or of the country which selects them? They know each other best; and what can England do but take their accounts of one another? There is one very remarkable circumstance in these Milesian brawls, as in all Milesian brawls, whether in back streets or senates, and it is a circumstance which should operate to the destruction of the theory that the Irish is a witty or a humorous race, which it certainly is not—that there is never any “fun” in the rows. A jest, a *mot*, a smart saying, never comes from Irish senatorial lips—they deliver only vulgar, brainless abuse, in heavy, foolish fashion. Gaiety itself is graceful; but your Irish orators, in these days, attempt the inflated, solemn style of talk—every one of them stands upright, looks austere, and delivers himself like Norval when Norval was in the act of giving his name and address. What amusement the House does get is consequently at the expense both of the fame for brains and the reputation for respectability of gentlemen from Ireland, who are set down not only as being injudicious and somewhat loosely moral, but as dull dogs who are only useful for worrying one another. If they had that sense of humour which is supposed to be a national trait, they would have with it a sense of the ridiculous, and so would avoid these sinister “scrimmages.” They make fools of themselves; and in a sober, advertising way. Captain Magan,<sup>1</sup> the tetterimous occasion of the wars of the week, enters battle in a red shirt! You find it difficult to realise the picture of Captain Magan, who, you know, has suspicious-looking moustaches and *prononcé* eyes, wearing a red shirt; but it is a fact; and what are you to think of the party who let loose a leader in an oriflamme!—this style, 5s.?” The idea of a man talking of public honour in a red shirt! What Treasury whip would keep a compact about income tax with a man in tittlebat moustaches and a red shirt? And that is from the deficiency in the party of a sense of the ridiculous—a sense which keeps parties, like individuals, out of many

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for West Meath.



improprieties. Take another Irish incident of the week. At the Thursday sitting—at about one in the morning—when all the business was over; when Secretary Wilson had his hand on the peak of his hat, about to take it off, and wink at the Speaker—what is motion of adjournment—when only about seven members were left; and when even Mr Brotherton looked as if he could go home, a gentleman rushed in, lurched about, and took his stand near the middle of the floor. “Misther Spaiker, surr.” All eyes were on the voice and the reeling figure; and dead amazement crept over the faces of the seven members, and Secretary Wilson removed his hand and shut his eyes. The voice was undoubtedly in the possession of the floor—it was a matter of calculation when it would take possession horizontally, of the said floor. “Surr,” said it again: and the Speaker said, “Order, order,” in faint and appalled terms; and the eyes of the seven members and the thin galleries were on the gentleman in the staggering voice who could not get beyond the exordium of his oration. What was it?—has anything serious happened?—for one did not know at first whether it was drink or agitation which affected the orator. Something came at last. “Surr, the bill (stagger)—inspection of nuns—honourable gentleman—in his place—bill—on nuns (stagger),—I’m a Catholic—want time—when will it come on?—consider” (stagger and sits down). It was only a “question”: the drunken gentleman wanted Mr T. Chambers<sup>1</sup> to say when he would face the Government with his Bill for the Inspection of Conventual Establishments; and Mr T. Chambers answered with crushing politeness. Then the voice staggered up again “in reply.” “Surr — (stagger)—holy Roman religion — (stagger)—inshult to Ireland:” and the voice and the man dropped again; and Mr Wilson opened his eyes, took off his hat, winked, and the House adjourned; the theory in the gallery being that the drunken gentleman would be taken home in a cab by Lord Charles Russell, as Serjeant-

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Chambers, M.P. for Hertford, and afterwards for Marylebone. He became Recorder of London, and died in 1891.

at-Arms,—rather a fine, chivalric nobleman—who goes through that sort of inconvenience for the sake of his salary. The drunken gentleman was an Irish gentleman, of the essentially “religious” section of the Irish representation; and rather venerated by the priests, and accordingly permitted to assist in the Government of the British Empire. Well, that is not an uncommon scene—uncommon neither of the man nor of his party; and, of course, the English House does not excuse it; because, however merciful it would be to the gentlemen who come in “gay,” and happy, and graceful, and laughing—as several very notorious and estimable gentlemen, English and Irish, punctually do at eleven o’clock p.m.,—it can only feel disgust for those who are offensive, because they are stupid, and who never get drunk but they insist upon the wrongs of Ireland and the rights of Popery. So that, on the whole, the Irish memberdom is not advancing in the British Parliament. Mr Duffy and Mr Moore, and their little party, have two Irish reforms to effect:—first, to make Irish “Liberal” members honest; next, to make them respectable.

But, as before said, dogs, however dull, can worry one another; and the pack have their purposes on Budget debates. Weary, very weary, are such debates at all times, but more peculiarly oppressive are they when it is ascertained so accurately as just now which way the divisions will go. It has even ceased to be amusing to watch Mr Disraeli’s inconsistencies; or one might go with some pleasure, if it were not so exhausted a one, to hear Mr Disraeli denounce a Legacy Duty (to be balanced by reductions in customs and excise) and a continuous income tax, after having reissued *Sybil*. But wondering reflections upon the career of Mr Disraeli are out of date; and as he and the party seemed satisfied—they taking their statesman as they take their cook (Disraeli in the House, and Palanque at the Carlton)—and both *chefs* content if they succeed in stimulating the jaded appetites of their employers—the public has nothing to do with the arrangement. The criticism, however, is legitimate that Mr Disraeli is very dull of late. We know that he can be

humorous and lively on a Budget, but all his wit was exhausted on his own Budget—on Mr Gladstone's he is only and unhappily argumentative; insisting on being severely logical, and yet not having a word to say against the most perfect financial scheme of our times: and his own genius in such encounters being completely overshadowed by that of Mr Gladstone, who, in the first place, happens to be on the right side; and, in the next place, is far more closely master of his subject, and can speak financial essays, as distinguished from "financial exertations." Last night, the lassitude which the Budget compels fairly conquered the House; Mr Disraeli could not force himself up to the speech due to his party; and the debate ended, to the astonishment of a full House, at eleven, no more speakers being forthcoming—a cause of adjournment which never occurred before, in the memory even of Mr Hume. Those who did speak oratorised in a dim and melancholy way—yawningly going through a public duty—except, indeed, Lord Goderich, who was brisk and pointed, indicating all the qualities for success in the life he has selected, and whose vigorously-delivered advice to the country gentlemen to have some common sense, if not common decency, about taxation, was all the more impressive that it came from one whose own interests are likely to be affected by legislative progress in those principles Mr Gladstone so unreservedly laid down. And the House, finishing business at eleven, was perplexed how to kill time till a sleeping hour, and unfortunately had no better subject than humorous denunciations of the corruption of Rye. After eleven, the House of Commons gets very candid about the public: and member after member admitted last night that the constituency of Rye was a very scampish body, but that really it ought not to be disfranchised, seeing that it was not a bit worse than most of the other places to whose votes a large class of English gentlemen are indebted for giving them a night-house at Westminster, available after the Opera is up, and when ball-rooms get too hot.

For there are evils which the ballot would not remedy,

—a profound consideration, which may reconcile us to Mr H. Berkeley's disappointment on Tuesday. There were 100 Liberals (going to give a safe Radical vote) waiting in the lobby and library for the motion, from seven till eleven; having nothing to do, they divided at eleven, in favour of a Protestant State interference with weak ladies in nunneries! Philosophic Radicals! Consistent Liberals! Appalled at such a vote in an enlightened House, Mr H. Berkeley took time to consider, balloted for a place last night, and is now postponed till the —, when further election and dockyard exposures may suggest new arguments for the Ballot panacea for an enlightened country, which cannot be trusted by the "people's party": people's party at present being very busy in taking you by the button, and convincing you that there would be no corruption if you got the ballot, because the briber could not bribe you if he could not be sure you would really give your vote for him. Older and less mortifying logic for the ballot was, that it was a protection to the intimidated classes of the enlightened land; but nobody seems to think about that now; or would it not be urged on Lord John Russell, that he has no right to disfranchise bullied labourers in the dockyards? for that if they are subject to improper influences, they are entitled, as Britons who never shall be slaves, to the concealment of the ballot. The suggestion, however, once made, as now, will be repeated. The Radicals will repent of the cheers with which they received Lord John's announcement this day week; and coalescing with the Tories will defeat the Government on the Disfranchisement Bill—a result which will still further endear Lord John to the Peelites. It is his policy to show the Peelites that he's the "popular man" of the Cabinet after all, and as the Veneer-Liberal must be treated decently.

## CHAPTER XV

Holidays—The Maynooth Grant—Disfranchisement of Dockyard Labourers—Bribery—Young Englandism—The real Disraeli

*May 21.*

SOME member ought to move for a Select Committee to inquire into the origin of the institution of Easter and Whitsuntide recesses. There is a traditional belief that a session of Parliament should commence about February and should never last over the 1st September, and that traditional notion is so firmly established that, notwithstanding what might be urged as to the consequences of hurry and bustle in public business, it would be quite in vain to attempt to disturb the accepted theory. But why an adjournment at Easter, when a fortnight is lost; why lose another week at Whitsuntide? Lord John Russell would refer you to the precedents—it has always been so; but this is an age in which everything has to find a justification for itself; and no ingenuity could hit upon an excuse for the rising of the House of Commons from yesterday week to yesterday. As to the Lords, who having nothing to do, always take a longer holiday than the Commons, the inquiry might be, not why they adjourn, but why they meet?—Peers being flies in the amber of the British Constitution. But with regard to the House of Commons it is certain that nobody wants these adjournments. Ministers would affect airs of over-work, and speak of the necessity of relaxation from the Treasury benches, in order that they may lie for a day or two “in their places” in the country. That, however, would be a sham of impossible credit; and to shorten the session at



Whitsuntide, when it is certain that the process would occasion a prolongation in August, is statesmanship only to be paralleled by the impoverished Irish gentleman's resource for lengthening the bedclothes, by cutting off a tail-piece with a view to the comfort of his shoulders. And the sham is in this: that hard work at great posts is great happiness; that Ministers of State never do feel work; and that, deprived of the lounge and the emotions of the House in the evening, they are ludicrously bored to kill time. Well, if Ministers don't want inter-sessional holidays, who does? Irish members, perhaps, who manage to correct the dissipations of the British metropolis by periodical resort to seasickness between Kingstown and Holyhead. But Irish members might contrive to arrange for that remedy by an agreement for periodical suspensions of Irish business, for in Imperial business they scorn to take an interest; and would the British public quarrel with a "compact" which diminished the frequency of Irish rows? Scotch members are too economical to indulge sentiment by unnecessary visits to their own, their native land; Mr J. M'Gregor, for instance, considering himself in these days of rapid communication and cheap postage far too well known to the world generally to require him to be planted on his native heath in order to communicate his name to gazetteers. Then, as to the mass of English members who glory in their crack club, "the House," and who, though they have all plenty of personal affairs to look after, can always find more amusement for their evenings at Westminster than anywhere else—these ludicrous and inconsequent adjournments are so many positive injuries; and were the suggestions divided on, ninety-nine out of every hundred would vote against any sort of holiday. As regards the public, it can afford to have members killed off by bad ventilation; there are always a hundred candidates ready for every seat, and the public consequently has a distinct interest in the uninterrupted continuance of its principal "public amusement"—Parliamentary proceedings. In the grave business view of the matter, these adjournments are mischievous absurdities, and cause the loss of an

immensity of money to promoters of private bills, and to the classes affected (and whose arrangements are thus anxiously suspended) by the legislation in progress—as in this instance, the many trades whom the Budget will revolutionise. Perhaps in these calculations we should consider the Speaker, who, simply because he has not direct mental occupation, would not live through a year of constant “sittings.” Doubtless: but Sir F. Thesiger would meet the difficulty, and recommend a corps of Speakers—say a Trinity.

There was one reason, it may be, for this last holiday—Lord John's health; but it is becoming a question for a “strong Government,” whether it can afford to be led by an invalid. Lord John's errors in the management of the House during his own Premiership destroyed his Government, and he is quietly and carefully now undoing on one hand what Mr Gladstone is doing on the other. Small defeats will, in the end, break up the strongest Government, for they destroy the prestige without which no Government can get on. Lord John's notion seems to be, always, that if you take care of great questions, the small questions will take care of themselves; and accordingly, he is nailing his colours of civil and religious liberty to the mast, while the little leaks below are sinking the ship. Before Whitsuntide he put the Government in a minority on the Convents Inspection Bill—the result of his disinclination to appreciate the tone of the House; and the first night the House meets after its breathe, he lets the Ministry be beaten on the estimate for the annual whitewashing of Maynooth—again because he did not comprehend what is in progress, and made no arrangement to meet Mr Spooner's motion—Mr Spooner, on the other hand, having packed his side, and tricked the Treasury benches. The Maynooth question is fought yearly in two ways. There is the struggle for the repeal of the permanent grant made by Sir Robert Peel in 1843; and there is Mr Spooner's small attempt, at last practically successful, to withhold the annual grant made to Maynooth as among other “public buildings;” and the latter is the “little go” of the bigots who, as they cannot

get rid of the scarlet lady altogether, will not allow her to patch her cloak. The very meanness of the motion of Spooner should have been an argument for proper precaution; for the Government which might look liberal if defeated on the "great go," looks ridiculous if plucked on the "little go." Mr Hayter sneaked out of the lobby into his whipper's bureau after such a vote—contemplating, perhaps, his resignation—or Lord John's, whose business it was to forewarn him—and, certainly, intending to write a few letters to the Maurice O'Connell class of Irish members which would undoubtedly diminish their relish of the Dublin Exhibition—for when Government is beaten, Mr Gladstone cuts Mr Hayter, and Mr Hayter slashes the "traitor" Irish members; and as for Mr Spooner, he strutted about the lobby, radiant, like a true-hearted Protestant, revelling in the consciousness that in 1853-4 panes of glass and chinks of doors in Maynooth should remain broken and unrepaired, and that if there must be a Host of Belial in Ireland the said Host shall suffer from lumbago; that if Anti-Christ is to be encouraged he shall have a catarrh. There were few Irish members in the House in the debate and division, and there were, therefore, none of the natural "rows" and "explanations," which, at another period, would have followed such a significant event; but as members came out after the division, and returned to the coffee and cigars, from which the division bell had summoned them, they looked and spoke gravely, frowned at Mr Spooner, and confidentially deplored that just now, when a great exhibition is encouraging internationalism, and Irish Roman Catholics are inviting good feeling and offering graceful hospitality to English officials, so *mal apropos* an insult as this petty, spiteful vote should have been offered, and that the *maladroit* Russell should have permitted it. Accordingly, the smoking-room was unfavourable that evening to the great Whig chief; and the probability is, that those who were most vexed with him were the gentlemen who, to their intense disgust, had found themselves in the majority. It is a terrible select committee room, this smoking-room; and if Mr Spooner had

been there on Thursday, he might have corrected some errors as to the appreciation by this age, even by pledged no-Popery senators, of men of his class. One suggestion of the smoking-room is, that Mr Spooner ought to be appointed as one of the inspectors of convents, for obvious reasons. Another is, that Lord John Russell cannot be in earnest about Jewish emancipation, or he would go up as a peer to plead the cause to the Lords. The Peelite Ministers will appreciate the sagacity of the hint all the more readily from observation of Lord John's demeanour in the sudden debate which arose last night on the *Regium Donum*. Mr Cobden, in an emphatic and most impressive speech, which for once fastened itself on the House, had elicited ringing cheers from the Ministerial side, by a bold declaration that the sort of sectarian strife created out of the ecclesiastical items of the miscellaneous estimates could not go on, and that the end of it all must be—the abolition of all State endowments of all religions. That declaration had stunned the Spooner side of the House, and if the warning had been permitted to pass—Mr Cobden's "religious" position giving weight to the threat—we should not for some months, not to prophesy more boldly, have heard any more of the cant which climaxes in anti-Maynooth window-mending motions. But Lord John thought a moment had arrived for sententiousness on civil and religious liberty; the elbows fell into the hands in the usual way; the House stared in dread expectancy of what was to be said for the Cabinet of the defeat of the preceding evening; and then Lord John, after a confession—Mr Hayter shuddered—that he had been taken by surprise by Mr Spooner—Mr Spooner grinned—went on. "With respect, sir, to the general question," to announce that he differed from Mr Cobden, and that the effect on his mind of the defeat was to induce him to reconsider his old theory for the destruction of the Irish difficulty,—viz., the endowment of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland!<sup>1</sup> And Lord John, having made this *coup*, could not sit down without expressing his regret that

<sup>1</sup> [In effect Lord John hinted this, but not so forcibly as to attract general attention.]

Mr Spooner was so ill-advised as to propose such amendments, which tended to promote religious discord. An Irish and Catholic member—Mr Maguire—a journalist who is gradually getting a hearing for his very practical, and not too patriotic leading articles—caught cleverly at the point, and wondered “really,” amid cheers and laughter at the correspondent of the Bishop of Durham rebuking Mr Spooner for so small a provocation of sectarian warfare. Even Mr ——<sup>1</sup> was applauded in correcting Lord John Russell, assuring his “noble friend,” in a thick voice and disengaged manner—it is Mr ——’s style after eleven—that he (his noble friend) did not know what he was talking about, that business was business, and that the House couldn’t afford to “bother” itself with balancing between priests and parsons. “Surr,” said Mr ——, in the midst of roars of laughter, “we must cut the painther, and sind for our priests as we sind for our docthors—only whin we want thum.” That was the tone of the significant, however short, debate; the tone of anti-State Church, in the sense of indifferentism; and because it was so it was madness in the leader of the House to raise a new suspicion on the part of the Spooners, without ensuring a single new friend among the Liberals.

But Lord John’s errors do not end with Thursday and Friday. He has matched Mr Walpole’s proposal of a militia franchise by his notice of a bill to disfranchise dockyard labourers. The suicidal silliness of the Radical cheers which welcomed that proposal was noticed in this place at the moment; and the disapproval of the scheme has been deepening since among all classes of members—so careful and scrupulous a party man as Whig Mr Tuffnell<sup>2</sup> actually putting an amendment on the paper, and defying his chief with a counter and substitutive proposition of the Ballot. If Mr H. Berkeley were wise, he would throw over his own annual motion, and collect all his strength to try the Ballot question on Mr Tuffnell’s amendment: for it could not but be carried; and if carried, the question

<sup>1</sup> See Hansard, 3rd series, vol. cxxvii., p. 484.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Devonport.



would immediately be :—If we protect intimidated government employés in the dockyards, why not enfranchise all other classes of Government employés? and if we protect Government employés in general, why should we not protect also with the ballot the intimidated classes of the enlightened country generally? That, then, is the damaging position of Government. Lord John must go on to a defeat, or he must mimic Mr Walpole and attribute his bill to a misconceived jest of Lord Aberdeen; and in either case the ballot is presented as the experimental remedy for the unqualified corruption and rascality of the majority of the constituencies in England—a great advance in position (which they don't deserve) for the Reformers. Lord John has fallen into this folly because he has generalised no rules of conduct for dealing with the electoral exposures. He is bewildered and he blunders. There are half-a-dozen writs still suspended; half a dozen commissions have been issued, each commission to end in a recommendation of disfranchisement; and still Lord John does not withdraw his undertaking to propose a reform bill in 1854, the possibility, then, being that British constituencies will be practically lessened one-third in number, and there being no guarantee that any better morality will be practised by the voting bodies which remain, or would be created. Clearly Lord John is not logical, and his colleagues may be sure that they are only postponing their perplexity by refusing to face the question which is now every night put to them upon the successive motions for new writs—what is to be done to check the tendency of electoral society in this country to bribe and be bribed? The dilemma for Englishmen who regard their country as enlightened is, no doubt, very painful; to withhold a writ implies that the affected place is unworthy of the franchise; and to renew a writ when a member has been unseated for bribery implies indifference to recognised rascal practices. And the previous question of all for Liberals is—if the countrymen we have enfranchised are such dead failures as independent electors, why add to the corruption by adding to the numbers of corrupters? Or, if we cannot prevent national

scoundrelism without secret voting, why carry on the British constitution on false pretences? These are the inevitable inquiries and perplexities; the tone of the House of Commons at this moment leads to that logic; and, under such circumstances, a Reformer asking for a Reform Bill is a politician reduced *ad absurdum*. The Canterbury Commission affords comment on a great number of the movements of the day somewhat prejudicial to their chances. Canterbury is a cathedral city, with an excess of ecclesiastical organisation; and in such a case, proximity to churches being proved not to be identical with intimacy with Christianity, what is there left to say in favour of the Establishment? Then the voters who were bribed were poor voters; and the Radical remedy would increase the supply so as to reduce the price, and then, when they could not get money to vote for, they would vote for conscience' sake; or—give them the ballot—and they would take the money, and still vote for conscience' sake. Again, the corrupters are the party for Church and State. Mr Forbes Mackenzie, whose name was mentioned, and who is proved to have given a large sum of money for corrupt purposes, will of course be summoned, and placed in the witness box, there to be treated by the indignant and ingenuous Anstey as roughly as Mr Coppock was in the St Alban's inquiry; and what a magnificent spectacle it would be for the hyper-Protestant party, which selected Mr Mackenzie as the most likely and pious man for no-Popery Liverpool, to behold that gentleman in the confessional, narrating the ways and means by which the country which is proud of the Reformed Religion, and abhors Maynooth for its "sinful teachings," is bought up for Lord Derby, the Protestant and the chivalrous! And when Mr Mackenzie, an M.P., has contritely confessed, will the House punish him as they talk of punishing Mr Stafford? And if Mr Mackenzie, who else? If Lord John acts up to the spirit of his Dockyards Bill and his vote against Sir Frederick Smith in the Chatham case, he would rapidly produce this double result: he would abolish all the constituencies, and not leave a single member! For a

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"leader," that is a very brave policy, dazzling in a man who has a Reform Bill nearly due.

The four days' holiday would have been a great gain to public business if Lord Derby and Mr Disraeli had returned with a policy for their party; but there are no signs that so desirable an idea has yet been hit on by those personages. They find fault—it is the only defect they can detect—with the Coalition, for postponing all principles: but how far more unlucky are the Tories—that they have no principles even to postpone. Lord Derby, we may conceive, has a possible policy; he may fall back upon the intense Toryism which will always be a distinguished feature of large masses of influential English society: and as the leader of the bigoted and the backward—those who pray for sectarian legislation, and insist on class legislation—he will always, safe from contempt in his peerage and his wealth, be a conspicuous and very powerful politician. But this is not the policy, we may presume to take for granted, which Mr Disraeli would sanction, or would contribute to. It seems understood, indeed, that he is bent upon making a vast effort to lift his friends to a level with his own conceptions of the true principles and purpose of a Conservative party. Mr Disraeli, in 1853, desires to see again the party he had built up in 1846—the party which was sneeringly called "Young England," but which he regarded as the true Conservative confederation on the genuine Tory basis. The Protection—*versus* Free Trade—struggle, which destroyed so much, and created so much, swept away the brilliant band of Young Englanders; but, that struggle over, and the new commercial policy accepted, the Conservative party is now where it was in 1846—in that position which Coningsby sketched—and now Mr Disraeli feels himself prompted again to apply his re-creative theories. And he has this advantage now which he did not possess before,—there are at present no Whigs. Mr Gladstone has taken up national finance where Sir Robert Peel left it, and Mr Gladstone is the Government; the Radicals are now where they were in 1846, not an inch more practical or more powerful. The Liberals are as

ready to follow Mr Gladstone as they were to follow Sir Robert Peel. And of the Conservative party Mr Disraeli may ask now as he asked before, "What is it that we have to conserve?" He could not have a completer chaos: there never was a better chance for the "coming man." Will he arrive? Mr Disraeli is too accurate in his perceptions not to see that a party was never kept together by negatives; and that the attitude which the Derbyites have taken up since their expulsion from office,—the attitude of a sulky opposition, proffering no plans—is ruinous: it has already given many votes to the Coalition, and it has rendered those who remain in gruff allegiance not only discontented, but contemptuous. Mr Disraeli is also too unerring in his calculations not to observe that Lord Derby has had his opportunity, and missed it, and will never get a second chance—no man ever did; and that the party which appearances indicate Lord Derby is now left to lead—the stupid and the selfish oligarchical classes—while it will always be strong, it will never again succeed in England. Mr Disraeli has, consequently, only one course to take—to wrench himself away out of the reach of the Spooner and Newdegate sections, and to proclaim a principle, and lead a new party representative of a current principle. Several circumstances combined to present that amiable confederation, the Young England party, in a ludicrous point of view to the public, but it had this merit—if *Coningsby* and *Sybil* were its Old and New Testament: that its principles were comprehensible, and that its policy, as a programme, was noble and generous. And this is certain, that it was the only party in which Mr Disraeli would not look out of place—a great advantage for an ambitious statesman. This is a party which is constructible out of the Tory Opposition: for where is the link between Lord Stanley or Lord J. Manners, and Mr Spooner or Mr Napier? It is a party which would diminish extensively the "Liberal" ranks; for where is Lord Goderich's place? among Whigs or Peelites? It is a party which would be nearer the people than any other party, for the debate on the Stocking Weavers' Bill a month ago has demonstrated

as Factory Acts' debates have demonstrated before, and as the Factory Acts' debates threatened again by Mr Cobbett<sup>1</sup> will again demonstrate—that the landed aristocracy sympathise with the masses more than the monied aristocracy do, simply because they can indulge charity without injuring their interests. And Mr Disraeli has had experience, as a man governing a nation as a class champion, that there is no power where there is not popular support. But to create such a party it is not enough to pass the word to abuse the Coalition, or to fasten upon the weaknesses and to ridicule the inconsistencies and the sillinesses of individuals. England does not love coalitions: and does not hate them; it ignores individuals, and judges of Governments by their acts. The gossip of clubs does not govern the polity of a nation; you cannot interest a people whom electoral exposures do not prove very high-minded in the mass, in the objectionableness of men, while their measures win almost universal approval. But a time comes, even for strong coalitions: and opponents should prepare for it by providing themselves with prospects and policies.

All this is suggested with a view to seeing Mr Disraeli released from a bondage in which he is not natural, and therefore not successful. In suitable circumstances, he would interest us and amuse us; and the public which admires him, and has still faith in him, would gladly help him in an effort at self-enfranchisement. They would give him again the power he covets, if he has the boldness to arrange a Tory party fit for power; and that is only to be accomplished by the destruction of the existing Tory party. But Mr Disraeli and England must preliminarily understand one another; and they don't at present. The delusions which he seeks to sustain are not even tacitly admitted. He is *not* regarded as the "Protestant leader" he pretends to be. He is *not* supposed to be the natural organiser of the "territorial aristocracy." The Mr Disraeli of "public life" is accurately known to be a foreign gentleman, above all national prejudices, and of a generous

<sup>1</sup> John Morgan Cobbett, M. P. for Oldham, the son of William Cobbett.



and cosmopolitan disposition, adequately enabling him to take very profound views of our history and of our contemporary politics; for some time figuring as an actor—an advocate—and succeeding in a wonderful performance—making a brilliant defence; but, at present, mistaking his *rôle*, and confounding his clients with his friends. In short, England knows that there has been a real Mr Disraeli and an histrionic Mr Disraeli; and that the real Mr Disraeli is to be found in the books and not in the speeches. That, however, the books may be spoken; and that if they were, the Mr Disraeli of 1853 could vindicate the Mr Disraeli of 1832; and prove, in the end, the most practical “leader” of his time.

## CHAPTER XVI

Church Rates—Church Rate Debate—The Admiralty Scandal—  
The Succession Duty—Sir Charles Wood

*May 28.*

Is it satirically that Lord Derby has named his horse for next year's "blue ribbon of the turf," the Dervish? Or is it the intention that Lord Stanley shall ride him—Captain Bateson to whip? Mr Walpole knows how Lord Derby is given to joking; and there may be a party meaning in the sudden backing of the Dervish. He is a horse who turned up on the day on which the House of Commons divided about Church Rates; and it is impossible to avoid thinking of him, and of his owner's humour in connection with the extraordinary steeple-chase, for which all parties in the House entered on Thursday night. The confusion was a climax in illustration of those kaleidoscopic party combinations, which have rendered "Government by party" an impracticability ever since Sir Robert Peel's death; but the groupings are of more than accidental importance—some of them are of permanent significance; and the moral of the whole affair is of enduring interest, seeing that it so forcibly suggests, in continuation of ample proofs, afforded during the session, Lord John Russell's inefficiency in his post as "leader." In the first place, it is very noticeable that Mr Disraeli has already accomplished the purpose attributed to him in this place last week, of breaking away, with the rest of his party, from the antique class of Tories—in effect, therefore, breaking up the Tory party, and dividing it on a question on which, one year ago, all Churchmen, not to say Conservatives, would have been furiously unanimous. In fact the hero of the debate,

though he contented himself with having printed his speech, was Lord Stanley; to his pamphlet, of course a suggestion of Mr Disraeli's, is to be assigned the whole of that influence which resulted in taking such men as James Macgregor and Mr Geo. Hamilton into a lobby, opposite that which Sir R. Inglis and Mr Newdegate entered, on a vital Church question. It was a very proud position for a young man to occupy—that of governing a discussion, and regulating a momentous division; and, it is to be hoped, Lord Derby's staunchest friends will appreciate the intellect of Lord Derby's son, although there may be doubts whether Lord Stanley's pamphlet has not left Lord Derby without a party. With Lord Stanley and Mr Disraeli voted Mr Walpole, Sir John Pakington, Lord John Manners, Lord Naas, Mr Cayley, Sir Edward Lytton, and Sir Robert Peel—intimating that, after twenty years' opposition, Lord Derby, too, would have gone with his son in a surrender of Church rates; and these names, taken in contrast with the Tories who went with the Radicals in the first division against Dr Phillimore's<sup>1</sup> motion, supply gratifying evidences that there is a progressive movement among the Conservatives, wider and bolder than would have been anticipated even from Mr Disraeli's boundless influence among the younger men. Of course, however, Lord Stanley did not go further than a vote for the motion; the Tories closed their ranks heartily against the more explicit amendment of Sir William Clay.<sup>2</sup> But the Whigs were separated both on the first and second division. Solicitor - General Bethel and Secretary-to-the-Admiralty Osborne voted plump against their chiefs, and against the motion; and against their Government and for the amendment there voted, in addition to the above, Sir William Molesworth—pity he had not the whole of Mr Osborne's courage—Mr Baines; Mr Fitzroy, Mr Lowe, Mr Keogh, and Mr Strutt.<sup>3</sup> Open

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Tavistock. He was not elected after 1857. He was appointed Judge of the Admiralty Court in 1867, and died in 1885.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for the Tower Hamlets. He died in 1869.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Strutt, M.P. for Nottingham. A member of the Aberdeen Ministry. Was created Lord Belper in 1856, and died in 1880.

questions are necessary in Coalition Governments, no doubt; but when half-a-dozen Ministers vote against another half-dozen Ministers, would it not be more decent not to vote at all, as the Radical Attorney-General Cockburn evidently thought? In the first division, most of the steady Ministerialists voted against Lord John; as, for instance, Mr Brotherton, who is a "practical" man, though a Liberal, and never vexes the Whigs, except in the most serious emergency, such as this, when disaffection was so general that a humble individual had a chance of escaping malignant notice; and with Whig Ministers, for Sir William Clay, there voted against Lord John such mild Liberals or Coalitionists as Lord Robert Grosvenor, Sir George Grey (a man seemingly down for the first vacancy in the Government), Mr Glyn, Mr Layard,<sup>2</sup> Mr Heywood,<sup>3</sup> Mr V. Smith, Sir J. Duke,<sup>4</sup> and the Ellices.<sup>5</sup> And these facts test Lord John's qualifications to lead a House of the present House's conflicting materials. The matter was a difficult one to get over, but Lord John got over it in the very worst manner, confusing his colleagues and his party to the greatest extent, and chiefly damaging the Government's *prestige* by showing that he was not as advanced or as prepared to deal with the question as the *par excellence* Church party themselves. He was in the same lobby with Lord Stanley for Dr Phillimore's motion; but with this difference, that Lord Stanley was ready to adopt the Doctor's bill, and that Lord John was only voting *pro formâ*, in order the more effectually to prevent any legislation whatever on the subject. Lord John's vote was ludicrously in contrast with his speech, and, as Mr Bright forcibly pointed out, with all his former conduct; and the only explanation to be given of that vote, and the dis-

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Layard, M.P. for Aylesbury, the distinguished traveller. He filled various offices, and ultimately became Ambassador at Constantinople. He retired from official life in 1880, and died in 1894.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for North Lancashire.

<sup>3</sup> M.P. for the City of London.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Ellice, M.P. for Coventry until his death in 1863. He never held office after 1834, but was the confidential adviser of Liberal Governments until his death. His son was M.P. for St Andrews.

organisation afterwards visible among Ministers is, that he changed a pre-arranged plan at the last moment, shrunk before the cheers of the Churchmen, and was abashed at the silence of his own benches, and calculated on avoiding a possible trap by tumbling into what proved a disastrous minority—in which Lord John looked silly, as is his wont lately. To do the Radicals justice, they were very well together in the “ruck,” as usual; and exhibited their well-known statesmanlike qualities in losing the chance of making use of Whigs and Tories to get Dr Phillimore’s bill brought in. They knew they could not carry the amendment, so they voted against the motion—repudiated the thin edge of the wedge, for once—and left the question over for another year; they are so devoted to principle, that they can’t afford to be rational. For what has happened they therefore divide the blame with the “Leader” of the House, who, nevertheless should have voted and led with them against the motion when he had ascertained their intentions; but the Radicals may enjoy this triumph peculiar to themselves, that they have allowed one of their pet questions to be tried on bad issues—Sir William Clay’s amendment being most awkward in construction; and many of them, as Mr Hume, voting for it with a protest against its provisions;—all this being the consequence of the absence of proper party organisation. However, as other parties appear to be imitating them, they are not likely to set about the presentation of a paternal depotism to Mr Hume, or of an autocracy over them to Mr Bright. Freedom from party restraints is evidently enjoyable; or—to give one among many instances—we should not see Mr Walter, a borough member and not a Tory, voting against both Dr Phillimore’s motion and Sir W. Clay’s amendment.<sup>1</sup>

The debate was far less interesting than the division. The electric telegraph to the Clubs and Covent Garden Opera House is fatal to good debates between eight and

<sup>1</sup> Dr Phillimore’s motion was to bring in a bill to alter and amend the law respecting Church Rates. The amendment of Sir W. Clay was that the House should resolve itself into a committee to consider whether Church Rates should not be abolished.



eleven o'clock; for who would leave Grisi for Wishy, or Mario for Washy? The House did not fill till near midnight; nearly until Lord John rose there were empty benches—Lord Stanley representing the whole of the Opposition: and twenty Radicals, who were all intending to speak, and fraternally contesting for the Speaker's eye with one another, constituting the House; and good speaking to thin audiences is as impossible as good acting to thin audiences; so that it was all very dull indeed. Dr Phillimore, the mover, made a beautifully clear and exquisitely-balanced speech, impressed upon the twenty Radical gentlemen by the polished manner and the fine voice; but the good speaking ended there, until Mr Bright's turn came, and his vigorous sententiousness told as usual,—it was so good to hear Mr Bright, "as a real friend to the Church," advising Sir Robert Inglis to have some sense. There was no getting over the hideous impression of boredom affected by Sir William Clay. The pretentious flatulence of that worthy gentleman is not acceptable on summer evenings; but he spoke long enough, and loosely and heavily enough, to give the hue of his own dreariness to the debate; and all that followed was ditto of Sir William Clay, the thin House unconsciously sinking from the oratorical into the conversational, and carrying on the discussion droningly, as in a committee. There is a Mr E. Ball in the House, who followed soon after the cognate Sir William; and the effect of Mr E. Ball,<sup>1</sup> who speaks in a sort of weeping howl, with a bass voice in mourning, is to be conceived on a question of Church rates. Mr Hume could not inspirit on such an occasion; and Mr Edward Miall, however admirable his leading article would have been in print, added nothing to lift the House out of its yawn and into oblivion of Clay and Ball. Mr Peto,<sup>2</sup> on the voluntary principle—he, the very illustration of it, the greatest subscriber of his age—was unaffected, energetic,

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Cambridgeshire.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Samuel Morton Peto, the famous contractor. He was then M.P. for Norwich. He afterwards represented in turn Finsbury and Bristol. He retired from Parliament in 1868, and died in 1889.

and earnest, and was cheered, as he deserved, by Mr Miall ; but as twenty Radical gentlemen around him bounced up when he sat down, it is to be presumed they did not regret his peroration. Then came Sir George Grey, as the benches got more occupants, with a flood of impetuous commonplace, and vehement truisms,—speed is his distinction as an orator—he tears along like an express engine—which has no carriages behind it ; and then succeeded Lord John,—a coal-wagon after a special, slow, and not more sure—feeble and cold, a leader leading in felted shoes and summoning his forces in a whisper ; the old Whig being laughed at by the young Tories, who are more abreast of the age, and growled at by the middle-aged Radicals, who take for granted that they are ahead of it,—sneered at and fumed at, of course by the men behind him,—Molesworth, who despised such a timorous policy, and Gladstone, who at anyrate, after having made his Government strong by a grand Budget, naturally objects to being led into a minority lobby once in every week, which is Lord John's way. All these aspects and influences were obvious when Lord John was on his legs ; he was palpably a man who had no hold of the House, and who had no business whatever in that attitude of leader, seeing that he was not only behind the spirit of the time, but not up to the tone of the House itself ; as Mr Bright, who followed, excited by the then filled House, and rattling along in all the pride of intellectual energy and animal strength, and with the impetus of strong convictions, and with the encouragement of perfect knowledge and mastery of his audience, brusquely told the Veneer member of the Cabinet—the rough hint bringing down a general cheer from the Ministerial side and supplying a “mem.” which Mr Disraeli took, and will not forget to make use of when the occasion arrives for his inevitable criticism upon the “unities” of Coalition Governments—as evidenced in the concluding and astounding division.

There is one name in the division-list which requires separate notice. Mr Augustus Stafford—an undoubted model Christian, more particularly with regard to a com-

mandment enjoining intelligibility and explicitness in statements, parliamentary and otherwise, who would not admit Jews because they would unchristianise the Legislature, and an equally undoubted model in his speciality as a Churchman—voted with the Progressive Tories for the motion, and then against the amendment. Very good for a Derbyite. But it is one of those questions of the day which must take its turn to be answered some night,—ought not Mr Stafford to take a Sabine farm in the Hundreds of Bucks? It is pleasanter to have his vote for than against the settlement of the Church rates controversy, but instead of giving that vote he ought to have been at that Blatherwyke Park which brings him in £25,000 a-year, and which saves his “personal honour” accordingly, whatever he may do—at his park to employ himself in reading Lord Brougham’s speech the other day on the increase of perjury in the lower orders. The House—the public at least—expected that after the report of the Committee he would have given up his seat; but he has great “pluck;”—a less mild name might be given to the quality:—he is resolved to face all the purists dare hint, and now it becomes a serious difficulty to decide what should be done. No man likes the initiative in such a business; and yet to allow Mr Stafford to escape altogether, would be mischievous to the reputation of the whole House. There is a provocation to extreme proceedings in his jaunty demeanour: the insensibility to a sense of proper shame demands correction, even a violent one. Mr Stafford is quite right in concluding that he only illustrates a general system, and that he is not much worse than the best member of the Commons, which is not a sensitive or scrupulous body in regard to public morality, and which, privately, is still partial to Mr Stafford’s society. But beyond the House he might detect the existence of a people which does not live in club routine, and which heartily despises him and would relentlessly punish him; and that he is so indifferent, because of his confidence in the sham of the House itself, argues unpleasant philosophy among the governing classes, and a want of

nationality, implying that the country is getting rather too enlightened in its tolerations. Mr Stafford is too small a person, of too petty and contemptible crimes, for an impeachment, but he is large enough for a resolution of censure; and, after that, even though he still lounged about the lobbies in the old How-do manner, he would be as marked as Hudson,—in, but of, the House; and to the Northampton Nemesis might be left the conclusive vindictiveness of rejection. As Mr Disraeli kindly says of Lord John, it would not matter to turn him out, because Lord John has “a resource,” so it may be remembered, in a consolatory way, that Mr Stafford—who has accomplishments that should have elevated him above the offices of an attorneying party tool—may avenge his fall, as Bolingbroke avenged his, by writing books, bewailing the imperfections of the political man. Martyrdom has its comforts: even at the stake he may enjoy the sight of legislative hypocrisy; and perhaps it is the apprehension of the sneers, as he would fall, which withholds the blow. Mr Keating’s<sup>1</sup> notice, “to call the attention of the House” to the report of the Committee, is too vague, and is too studiously *not* personal to satisfy the demand felt rather than expressed, but felt forcibly. But the discussion even brought on that way will call for a new combination of parties, and will put Lord John in another difficulty—Lord John, doubtless, being again prepared to stultify and to cast suspicion on the “first assembly of gentlemen in Europe.”

The Government, however, get on when Lord John is away, and the work done last night by Lord Aberdeen in the Lords, and by Mr Gladstone in the Commons, was calculated to put the members of the Cabinet in sufficient good humour with one another and the world to prevent quarrelling at the council to-day. In the first place, the attempt made respectively by Mr Disraeli and Lord Malmesbury to convict Ministers of a false move at Constantinople was palpably premature; for there were no

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Reading. He was afterwards Solicitor-General. He was made a judge in 1859, retired in 1875, and died in 1888.

facts on which to base the contemplated insinuation; and the Opposition attitude became consequently the unworthy one of cavilling for the cavil's sake—objecting, but not advising; and at the same time getting no information. But the “interpellations” which passed in the gaping and gobemouche senate were a commendable illustration of Kossuth's recent remarks on our “secret diplomacy.” The interpellations obtained the most reverent attention because they were about the possibilities of an European war; but the parties to them were esoteric statesmen; the represented public was profoundly ignorant of the influences at work and of the cause at stake, and was not impertinent enough to ask for instruction. The William Williams and Lord Monteagle<sup>1</sup> class of members trembled and were perplexed; but they knew nothing, and had no chance of knowing anything of what was going on nor of what they had to expect, and they sat silent. Not, however, that they had great trust in Lord John or in Lord Clarendon, but because they are accustomed to the parliamentary system, which leaves the people utterly powerless in regard to British policy outside Great Britain. M. Kossuth, reading these interpellations to-day, will continue his astonishment at our national flattery of ourselves, that we are a decidedly free and unreservedly self-governing country.

In the second place, the Government got “strong” last night by its rebuffs of the feeble, quasi-Protectionist opposition to the Budget.

Lord Derby, querulous, testy, and mischievous, had the folly to fight a regular pitched battle with the Government in the Lords on the Succession Tax (Legacy Duty Extension); and, in evidence how completely the Coalition has broken up the Conservatives, and how largely Lord Derby has sunk as a “safe” guide in the confidence of the Peers, he was beaten easily. There was great anxiety about the division, because, as the first real struggle the ins and the outs have had in the Lords, there was much doubt of the issue. Lord Derby erred doubly in the course he

<sup>1</sup> Lord Monteagle, formerly Spring Rice, Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Melbourne. He died in 1866.



took, first, because he got the question so put as to make the division a Peers' division—content or non-content with the Budget—certain to damage his chances and lessen his leadership if he was left in the minority; and secondly, he has blundered in risking the question,—had he a constitutional right to force on the Lords a controversy about the finance of the Commons? No very general objection will be taken to his arrangements for political suicide; but his own class is intensely interested in his bad temper and fussy ambition, not being allowed to bring the Upper House into a false position. Lord Derby, with his instinctive longing for excitement, will not face the fact, that the Lords *are* a quiet court of registration, which wise lords like Lord Aberdeen are willing that it should be, that being the condition of its existence at all; and accordingly, such “marry come up” speeches which Lord Derby spoke *at* the Commons gallery last night—impotent exhibitions of fidgety enviousness, certainly not calculated to impart dignity to the “order” the orator affects to vindicate. For the Peers to confess to an ignorant impatience of taxation could never be judicious, and was last night, an exhibition least of all serviceable to their interests, seeing that they attacked precisely that portion of the Budget (which has other defects)<sup>1</sup> which is the most popular. And whatever justification Lord Derby might have had, could he have got a majority, he remains without any, after a defeat:—as, indeed, directly after the defeat was buzzed about along the great corridor into the Commons, and even among the whilom Protectionist and subsequent believers in chivalry benches. From the one House to the other was rung the change in scenes of the same play: the curtain fell on Lord Derby and rose on Mr Butt. The selfish *ruse* having failed, the patriotic generosity was being attempted. Lord Aberdeen having refused to give up the legacy duty on land, Mr Butt, a usefully-loquacious Derbyite, was put up to insist upon an exemption from income tax of all incomes under £150 a year; and on that there was a division too; and on that

<sup>1</sup> [The Succession Duty Bill.]

also the Government gained strength. But Mr Butt was only a guerrilla. Mr Disraeli left the House when the motion was made,—Mr Disraeli usually sitting still and stern, all argument having surrendered to the triumphant destinies of Gladstone; and Mr Butt, who wants a judgeship when Mr Disraeli is next in office, was therefore unhappily unappreciated, and had to endure Mr Gladstone's sneers without reward or consolation. Yet Mr Butt was far more statesmanlike than Lord Malmesbury or Lord Derby had been that evening: for the Lords repudiating legacy duty were just as ludicrous as Mr Tollemache,<sup>1</sup> as member for Cheshire, denouncing the reduction in the import duty on cheese; and Mr Butt was worthy of a better fate than being laughed at as a busy Irish barrister, seeking patronage from English governing classes. Mr Gladstone demolished Mr Butt as he had demolished all Mr Butt's predecessors (that evening) in the moving of impossible amendments. Mr Gladstone has a quiet, contemptuous way, which is a great hit in committee, and which is enabling him to pass the causes of his Budget Bill with most workmanlike rapidity. His knowledge on the minutest points of detail is marvellously elaborate, and yet he has the faculty of never letting his hearers sink among the details, while his explanations are so clear and so complete that he has never to "explain." To all these gifts, specially happy in a Finance Minister having to defend at all points a surprisingly-complicated scheme of taxation, he adds the gift,—of being insensible to labour. Fighting that Income Tax Bill through Committee for seven hours last night was a work equal to a many-briefed barrister's whole single term in Chancery; and yet at one in the morning, Mr Gladstone was entreating the House to "go on." He has been "surprised" so much lately at motions for adjournment on this Budget that he is gradually getting the House out of its modern Brothertonian habits. The rule is now setting in for members to go home at daylight, wondering how they will get down to their committees at eleven.

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for South Cheshire.

But Mr Gladstone is not fully employed with the Budget. He has taken up another labour in the Savings Bank Bill, of which he has given notice: so shaming Sir Charles Wood, who, never working at all, never had the courage to grapple with the subject. Sir Charles hadn't courage to govern savings banks; but he will get up quite cool, on the 3rd, to govern India. Sir Charles is a Yorkshire squire, who was never heard of till the Greys insisted on his being made Finance Minister in 1846, and as a Finance Minister he was the dearest failure remembered in our times—and we have known Lord Ripon<sup>1</sup> and Lord Monteagle. But this Yorkshire squire is quite ready to undertake the management of the finance, and politics, and society of 150,000,000 Hindoos, and, of course, will be considered, on the 4th, to have made an "able statement." Represented public knows little of Constantinople, but how much less of Calcutta! On the 4th, therefore, something more may have to be said above the self-government, as suggested by Kossuth, of the British Empire.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Ripon, "Prosperity Robinson," was Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Liverpool.

## CHAPTER XVII

Government of India Bill—Parliamentary Oaths Bill—Lord  
Lyndhurst—Lord J. Russell and the Catholic Members—  
The Opposition—Irish Church Debate—Macaulay

*June 4.*

"THE question upon which we have to ask the House to proceed to legislate," said Sir C. Wood last night, trying to rise to a conception of his position, "affects, for weal or woe, the destiny of 150,000,000 of our fellow-subjects." He-ar, he-ar, said three British gentlemen, in conscientiously solemn tones. No doubt it was a vast topic, and a great occasion: but only 150 gentlemen could be got together to be audience. There were perhaps 50 more when Sir C. Wood got on his inexpressible legs; but they fled at the signal and were off, scattered through town far out of reach of that dreadful man; comforting their consciences with the promise that they would read the newspaper summaries in the morning, and do what they could for the 150,000,000 fellow-subjects. And more than 50 would have gone; hardly a House of the mysterious 40 would have been kept, but for a personal interest, not concerning the 150,000,000 in any respect:—a rumour, almost a belief, that there was a "split" in the Cabinet on the business—that Sir Charles was talking only for the Whigs—and not for the Peelites—and that there was a chance, this fact intimating that the measure was a bad one, of a Government failure, a hostile division, a resignation, and so on. A circumstance somewhat unusual confirmed the impression. No sooner was Sir Charles shot up for his oration than Mr Gladstone was on his legs too, hurrying away, up to the gallery, on to the

bench, and in five minutes into a deep sleep. Colleagues don't do this ordinarily: and the supposition was—he didn't care to hear a drone through a Bill he had already repudiated, and would be glad of a decent opportunity to retire upon. Certainly, Mr Disraeli, having received news from the city that the stock conversion scheme was a complete failure, owing to that odd rise in the bank's rates, had just given notice, with a coolness unsurpassed even in Mr Disraeli, that he should shortly call the attention of the House to "the state of the finances of this country;" a phrase which suggests that a coalition has brought us to bankruptcy; and Mr Gladstone, who could not be good tempered after the Ministerial events of the week, felt, doubtless, the fine irony of such a notice of motion. But the one cause would suffice for a retreat; human nature, however well trained in parliamentary tediousness, must give way under Sir Charles Wood. Here is a Yorkshire squire, of the narrowest capacity for business, utterly unable to speak a sentence in English, with no conception of literary arrangement in statement, with a gulositous voice which renders him incomprehensible for twenty minutes out of every sixty minutes, put up to govern India—his 150,000,000—having been in the Indian department about six months, and, before he entered the Indian department, having, most likely, doubted whether Hindostan was on this or on the other side of the Persian Gulf. Why? Because he is a Whig country gentleman of immense conceit, who married into the Greys, and whose property and family influence was such that he could not be left out of a coalition, the organisers of which did not look beyond the clique of a class which breeds not only hereditary legislators, but hereditary Secretaries of State. It is ludicrous to hear Sir C. Wood making a speech; the man would be driven and hooted from any debating club of boys; he would be a butt in a vestry; he would be submerged at a railway meeting. As Chancellor of the Exchequer he made a notorious *fiasco* in his measures principally because no one could ever get at any comprehension, from him, of what the measures were; and if ever



they were passed, it was because his private secretary waited upon the editors of newspapers to explain. But of finance, after several years' practice, and some knowledge of the account books of his estate, he knew something and perhaps had a notion of what he ought to say. Of India he could know nothing; and it is a fact, that if Mr Robert Lowe had not been sitting as prompter,—not being married into the Greys, he is made a subordinate to cram Wood—putting him right every ten minutes, he would never have got to the end of his speech at all. The exhibition was, therefore, pitiable; but it was offensive; and how the House felt it was evidenced in the way it thinned after the first hour, was left thinned long after the dinner-hour, and filled only when Mr Bright got up and then cheered *him* on all sides, but one side clearly out of vexation with Wood, and to get a relief for the wearied and bored heart. Sir Charles talked in a parenthesis of an hour an apology for his incompetence to deal with the “magnitude”—that word came in about twice a minute—of the subject; and one thought and asked, Why, then, didn't you go back to Yorkshire, and leave it to your sub, who, you know, is a man of genius? Yet, with all his sense of incompetence, he talked from half-past five to half-past ten—five mortal hours of a second-rate Yorkshire squire on behalf of the 150,000,000. Plain purpose, symmetry, construction, there was none in his speech; and what he said could have been said in an hour, could have been written into a column of a morning paper, instead of being reported into fifteen columns; and after such an elaboration of chaos, it becomes a question of the day—why are these great Ministerial statements spoken—why are they not laid on the table like resolutions or bills? They are only spoken, as last night, to Houses of fifty bored senators, trying to keep up a decent appearance to the Strangers' Gallery—to be printed; and the process involves excessive printing, and practically the non-reading by the public of what the public should familiarly know; and why should not the ludicrous process be reversed? the beginning begun at the beginning? Mr

Gladstone was endurable—Mr Disraeli was endurable—in their respective five hours' budgets; but when we get Sir C. Wood's performances, we are compelled to consider whether matters could not be arranged in a private interview with the reporters' gallery before dinner. At any-rate, if we are to get pamphlets for speeches, let them be good pamphlets—let the Woods be edited by the Lowes. Sir Charles was sloppy, slovenly, and loose, with neither exordium nor peroration: it was all middle. He started with a rush *in medias res*, and he floundered there all night—perorating in a jerk responsive to a twitch of the coat tails. It was a peroration about the progress of Christianity in India, and what Sir Charles would do to advance the cause of Christ. By what?—by educating the natives. Sir Charles—who had talked fifteen columns, and not one sentence of English!

Nearer religions have occupied attention during these last few days—Lord Derby—about to face an Oxford installation, and scrupulously bigoted up to the last moment—would have it that Lord Lyndhurst meant to let in the Jews by the Parliamentary Oaths Bill, and out the Bill has gone accordingly, with two consequences—one, Lord Lyndhurst's ire, almost persuading him to coalesce with the Coalition; another, the last feather in breaking down the "austere intriguer's"<sup>1</sup> endurance of Lord Derby; so that there is a prospect of debates in the Lords improving, when Lord Derby gets back to provoke the two angriest and two of the most able men in the empire. He revelled in spitefulness in regard to that bill. Lord Derby is essentially, be it said with due regret, a little-minded man, of a peevish, vixenish nature—though, being an Earl, whenever he scratches, he is said to be chivalrous—and Lord Lyndhurst, however anxious to please his Semitic connections, ought to have known that the occasion he has presented of hitting the Government through him would not be lost by the man who has no

<sup>1</sup> [By the way, this high-Tory epigram is an imported Gallicism; it was applied to Guizot by the journals of the Opposition in the days of French Parliamentary journalism.]

other amusement but debating and dividing. He threw the bill out on an hypothesis, and that was ludicrous, in a "responsible" senate; but it was as good a reason as another when his mind was made up to tease the Coalition, whom he can't forgive for having convinced mankind that he is an incapable, as little qualified for the consulship as his two-year old animal, "Dervish." A little thought should have convinced him—his son might have suggested to him—that public opinion generalises, and that the nation, finding Lord Derby attempting to restrain the hidden Liberalism of Lord Lyndhurst, will come to a dismal conclusion as to the position of the former in respect to the "spirit of the age," and that such a suspicion, just now, does not promote practical power, even in the Peers, whatever the readiness of the Mesdames Harris of that assembly to invest in him their proxies. The public *will* generalise, and will not master all the facts and circumstances; and after Lord Lyndhurst's speech, Lord Derby's vote will be accepted as the vote of a silly man, falling back from the Conservative party into the ranks of the camp followers and preachers—the Winchelseas and Inglises. For half a century has Lord Lyndhurst served that Conservative party, led by Lords who, as a rule only proved by exceptions, are incapable men. The Conservative party is always importing and bringing up champions—once it was Lyndhurst, then Peel, now Disraeli: and his reward is—he is repudiated when he is seeking to relieve it from a stigma stupidly attached to it, out of the mere personal littleness and spitefulness of a man who never could distinguish between the characteristics of a party debate and a cock-pit struggle. Lord Lyndhurst, however, got his reward; for the first time, in his restless career, he has felt the mass of his countrymen moving with him; and that sensation must have been grateful when he talked over, with Mr Disraeli, Lord Derby's wrong-headedness, and when these two foreign gentlemen—the son of the American, and the grandson of the Spaniard—shook their heads over the bigotry and boobyism of inane British nobility. Lord Lyndhurst has other compensations. He had performed a

parliamentary feat which is not likely ever to be paralleled. Eighty-one years of age, he walked down to the House of Lords, and made a speech of an hour's length, and in which no traces of age could be detected:—no, not even in the voice, which, though low and subdued, is still tempered into that telling modulation which used to make it a notorious musical luxury to find Lord Lyndhurst on his legs. He is not now, observe, to be listened to as you listen to the Marquis of Lansdowne;—as a relic of the old style of parliamentary oratory. Lord Lyndhurst never adopted the parliamentary style; he aimed at fine elocution, and not at the knack of “the House;” and he succeeded in being the finest speaker of his time—something to succeed in, seeing that in his time he has seen two generations of fine speakers, from Charles Fox to Benjamin Disraeli. An excitement would reproduce, even now, his old vigorous and desperate sarcasm—a sarcasm from Lord Lyndhurst is given in a Kean whisper, inexpressibly searching—and it would be a vast benefit to an unamused gallery, at present, if he could be got into a good passion with Lord Derby. And it would be a benefit to the Government: for, with all the “array of talent” talked of so loudly, when the Coalition was formed, they are actually brow-beaten by Lord Derby. He is ready and impudent, and they only match him with men who are only impudent and not ready. The Duke of Newcastle always raises his voice and tries to look contemptuous; but he confesses too much anger. The Duke of Argyll, if he were youthful and natural, would be a fair antagonist; but he argues; and Lord Derby should be laughed at, for Lord Derby, in a proper point of view, is ridiculous. Earl Grey says very savage things, and really feels the inspiring disdain; but he is now sulky with the Government, and it is not his business to debate for them. Then Lord Aberdeen—he has no readiness, and is bidding for some of Lord Derby's proxies, and daren't talk out to the party, though, as we have seen lately, he can lose his temper, now and then. As for the Marquis of Lansdowne, he acts in the Lords, like Lord John Russell (as Lord John fancies) in the Commons—only as

Veneer-Liberal, and doesn't talk. His buff and blue (he dresses like a cover of the *Edinburgh*—Whigs have lost all other distinctions) is seen standing out from the reach of the Ministerial benches, merely to relieve the Austrian colours of Aberdeen, black on white—as, in fact, warranty of a Cabinet whose colours will wash. If Mr Gladstone cannot get rid of Lord John, he should go up to the Lords himself, or send Osborne, or Cockburn. Without a debater, they'll never get Lord Derby's majority out of his hands. If some man of weight and tact would set to, and devote a session to exposing the real nature and character of Lord Derby, that distinguished nobleman would gradually disappear in training stables.

But there have been not only incidental, but direct religious feuds. The debate on Mr G. H. Moore's motion, on Tuesday, raised the whole question of religious endowments; and the division taken, as it has been, in conjunction with the division on the Nunneries Inspection motion, is likely very largely to affect the position of the Government in Ireland. Lord John Russell raised, with his usual tact, a special religious question,<sup>1</sup> in proving—eager cheers waiting on his every word from the *Opposition* side of the House—that the Catholic priests of Ireland were the enemies of liberty (how Mr Keogh must have quaked!), and in showing that it would not do to endow them (which was not the point) because they would be inclined to oppose the Coalition—as if Mr Keogh had not positively informed him that all the Bishops approved of his (Mr Keogh's) acceptance of office. Lord John did not weaken his position in England by attacking the Roman Catholics, though he probably may have found, in his Durham letter experience, that truths of the kind he talked on Tuesday had better be left to the professional Tories; but the recklessness of his lead in the matter was this, that he could have resisted the motion, and got it defeated, and

<sup>1</sup> Monsell, M.P. for Limerick, had resigned office in consequence of references made by Lord John Russell to the Roman Catholic Church, but withdrew his resignation, on being assured by Aberdeen that the references were not concurred in by Aberdeen and many of his colleagues.



kept his Government together without repeating the Durham letter, and again estranging Ireland. Tuesday was a Durham letter debate scene—a packed House. Lord John with his elbows in his hands; dead silence on the Ministerial benches above and below the gangway; and hurrahing cheers from the Opposition country party. While Lord John was lifting his treble to demonstrate that the Roman Catholic priests were the enemies of liberty two gentlemen in front of him were conspicuously loud in their hear, hears; and sight of them should have been the comment on his logic. They were Messrs Napier and Whiteside, spokesmen of the University of Dublin, and of “Orange” society in Dublin; and perhaps, on the whole, the most blatant and intense Tories of their era. Lord John, remembering that these gentlemen had been in the Derby Ministry, might have asked himself whether it was quite clear that Protestantism, *as a church*, led more directly than Popery, as a church, to liberty? But Lord John has given up thinking; having no office, he is out of practice; and so on Tuesday, he quietly “sold” all the Peelite members of the Coalition, destroyed their growing popularity in Ireland, and put the Government in Ireland exactly where the Russell Government was.<sup>1</sup> Mr Gladstone, they say, did not like it; but what can Mr Gladstone do? You cannot have a cabinet council to disown a speech. You can, however, have a cabinet council to repudiate a measure; and, as we see, Lord John has been obliged—one thought of Mr Walpole withdrawing his militia franchise—to intimate that, “in consequence of other important business,” he will not go on with his Dockyard Disenfranchisement Bill. Rather odd, however, for a “leader.” More people than the present writer thought of a parallel between Lord John and Mr Walpole, on Thursday, for the grin was general in the House, though the grin did not aggravate into that audibleness which justifies the scrupulous stenographer in recording “a laugh.” Members of the House have not yet realised the idea of Lord John having

<sup>1</sup> [This was written, of course, before the publication of Lord Aberdeen's correspondence with Mr Monsell.]

become laughable ; and, besides, “ a laugh ” is becoming serious in public business,—as witness divers incidents, two or three noted out of many. Mr Disraeli was replying, late on Tuesday, to Lord John Russell, about the Budget. “ Mr Disraeli thought that the noble lord had treated his observations in a very disingenuous spirit, and did not consider himself bound to say, as the condition of postponement, that he would oppose this particular motion. [An honourable member laughed.] He supposed that the honourable gentleman who had indulged them with that intellectual sneer would not speak ; indeed, he advised him not to do so, but rather to adhere to that particular style of oratory in which he was super-eminent. (Laughter and cheers.) ” Then observe the effect which a laugh has upon Lord Derby's Lord Chancellor. This is an occurrence taking place among the grave Lords in the course of this week :—“ Lord Campbell : Read the words of the Act of Parliament ! Lord St Leonards <sup>1</sup> was understood to retort—Did the noble and learned Lord mean to say he could not state the effect of an Act of Parliament without reading it ? (Laughter.) [His Lordship had taken the Act in his hand, as though about to read from it, but, immediately on hearing the laughter, he desisted. After a few inaudible sentences, expressive of his opposition to the address, he resumed his seat, and two or three minutes had only elapsed when he walked out of the House.] ” <sup>2</sup> Observing these results of non-respectful hilarity, Mr Gladstone might engage someone to go off into uncontrollable merriment whenever Lord John's elbows fall into Lord John's hands—for then the Cabinet is invariably in danger—and Lord Aberdeen should train,—for an imitation of Momus—with a Minister on each hand to hold his sides,—whenever Lord Derby rises to talk chivalry at venerable Red Tapers. He would find it better than getting into a passion—which is Lord Clarendon's only *forte* and fails with him.

Wanted, then, by the Cabinet—a *Cervantes* for Lord Derby. What an effect would be produced in the Lords if this needed individual were to give notice of this question :

<sup>1</sup> Edward Burtenshaw Seyden.

<sup>2</sup> [ *Morning Chronicle* Report. ]

Whether the noble Earl, whom I see in his place, will—with the batch of Doctors—take Coventry in his way to Oxford? The Coalition is standing on its dignity; but meanwhile, the laugh is getting up against it: Mr Disraeli is actually training a corps of jesters, who think that they are serving the “Conservative” cause by making the people merry over the strongest Government of modern times. Mr Disraeli laughed Peel out of place: and may make Lord Aberdeen ridiculous, even in the eyes of Court; but it is not very clear, so far, that the policy is serving him, if it be indeed true that he has given in, and is going off. Certainly he might as well be touring for the Asian mystery as sitting still and looking helpless on the Opposition front bench: *de jure* leader; and *de facto* having to see Pakington, Walpole, and Lord John Manners (the latter statesman with an amendment in favour of dear<sup>1</sup> Piktureth) leading minority amendments night after night. Why did not either Mr Disraeli or one of his colleagues take part in the Irish Church debate on Tuesday? Was it because they thought they could add nothing to Lord John’s oration—believing that Lord John was, *pro tem.*, leader of the Tory and higher Protestant party? Were they afraid that if they commented on Lord John, Mr Gladstone might comment on them, and so set the Government right again? Or because they foresaw “an Irish difficulty” roused by that one speech which might curtail Mr Disraeli’s travels? There they sat, however, stolidly silent; and enjoying Mr Bright’s reply to Lord John. Mr Bright seems to have hit on his mission; he is always replying to Lord John now; and he never did it better than on Tuesday. The Radicals have lately made up their minds that there is no more hope in Lord John; that what is to come out of this Government is to come from Mr Gladstone; and hence Mr Bright is becoming unreserved about the Ministerial leader—and Mr Bright, in a state of unreserve about any particular man, is rather a formidable orator. Mr Bright is also aiming—very practically—at getting hold of the Liberal Irish members; and on Tuesday

<sup>1</sup> [On a National Gallery question.]

he combined his objects—destroyed Lord John Russell in Ireland, and got furious applause from the Celtic and Roman Catholic gentlemen below the gangway on the opposition side—even clutching a cheer now and then from the Ministerial Celtic and Roman Catholic gentlemen, who like Keogh and detest Lucas, and are favourable to an equal distribution of Treasury patronage among Irish and English of the hanger-on classes. Perhaps Mr Bright has no equal—it is his peculiar style—(illustrated in his Burke-like Indian declamation last night)—in sneering invective, in suggesting rather than in speaking contempt; and his energetic innuendoes told wonderfully on Tuesday. His comparison between Ireland and Canada, between the principles of self-government as insisted on for Canada, and the principle of forcing an alien religion upon Ireland, as now actually defended by Lord John Russell, was masterly and appropriate—was putting an old controversy in a new light, effective as being that in which the people could best see it; and Mr Bright, unlike Lord John Russell, never forgets that there is an audience beyond the Club to be talked to, influenced, and governed. But see the results of that splendid speech—eighty men voted for the motion. Could there be a better proof of the idiocy of Radicalism, its ruinous want of organisation? Some sixty or seventy Irish members should certainly have voted for the motion; and would, but that Mr Keogh has broken up the Irish party, and that Mr Moore took no pains, either through constituencies in Ireland, or about the House in England, to get pledges; and, besides these, there are at least eighty Radicals who, if led and officered and governed properly, would have been bound to be present on such a division, and, if present, to vote with Mr Moore. Mr Moore is a very unpopular man with members of all sorts—his own countrymen and English Radicals; and if you met men next day and asked them why they had not voted, they would say, “the question has no business in his hands.” But ought not personal tactics to be arranged beforehand? When Sir Henry Ward had charge of the Irish Church question, the two kingdoms were beat up for recruits; when

Mr Roebuck put the notice on the paper session after session (and never brought it on) the Anti-State Church Association wrote and talked him and it up for months before the expected day. This year the matter is incidentally tumbled on; and eighty loose men—present by accident—vote in the minority. Are we getting less liberal as our age gets more enlightened? Mr Bright warned the noble Lord of one thing in the course of the Durham-letter debates: let him pass this measure, and he will have to give up the Irish Church. Is this the proof of it? The general election in Ireland turned as much on this question as on any other, and here is the result: Mr Whiteside talking his vehement bigotry, in a stupendous brogue with an infuriated madman's gestures, to a not very dissatisfied House; Mr Lucas cowering into moderation, with a deprecatory voice, in the presence of a clearly unfavourable assembly, and about twenty English Radicals following Mr Bright, after one of the most superb debating speeches ever delivered. And after the mischief—for the question goes back, after such a division—Dublin resolves to meet and protest, and to invite Mr Moore over to bark his disgust; and the English Radicals find their solace in going about to shake their heads at Lord John. "Did you read that speech? By ——! I'm hanged if he's not going to throw the Peelites over, and try a coalition with Lord Derby!" But there is good out of the evil, if the Irish Liberals would but consent to see it. If they fight the point in the House of Commons, they must arrange for the House of Commons, and it is an English House of Commons. Every one of the Irish members who spoke on Tuesday did the cause a mischief: the House would listen to no one, for the motion, but an English member, Mr Bright. The Irish members must fight the battle through the English members; for whatever Irish public opinion demands can only be carried by getting English public opinion in favour of it. And, after such a division, not in the House, but in the country, what is the use of meeting in Ireland? publishing tremendous "leading articles" in Ireland? Ireland is convinced already; it is English



public opinion that has to be influenced ; and there must be meetings and newspapers in England ; and Mr Bright's advice must be taken. Let the Irish members (Mr Keogh might go back to them if they'd unite) devote their attention to this one question. If they did, they would carry it. Lord John's speech has to be answered, not in Ireland, but in England, where he is supposed to have talked truths ; and the answer is the last sentence of Mr Moore's rather spirited reply—this question, " Was there a single question affecting civil and religious liberty that the Catholic representatives and the Catholic clergy had not supported, and that the representatives and the clergy of the Irish Established Church had not strenuously opposed ? "

It was pleasanter talking on Wednesday, when the position of Mr Macaulay in Great Britain was measured in a great way. On a Wednesday the House and the committees are sitting at once, and the building is filled with scattered M.P.'s—some at work, many looking at those who are at work, but more loitering about the lobbies and corridors, picking up old or new acquaintance and feeling for public opinion. About three, on Wednesday, one was loitering about, too ; for the talk in the House was not interesting<sup>1</sup>—on a Wednesday it seldom is—and one could pick up members' opinion, which is as important as public opinion. You were walking along the committee lobby, wondering which " room " you would take next, when, as you paused uncertain, you were bumped against by somebody. He begged your pardon, and rushed on, and you looked to see who it was : a member—a stout member : a man you couldn't conceive in a run : and yet he's running " like mad." You are still staring at him when two more men trot past you one on each side ; and they are members, too. You are very puzzled, and see the door close to you—" Members' Entrance " above it—dashed open, five members dash from it, and plunge furiously down the lobby. Why, what can be the matter ? More doors open ; more members rush out ; members are tearing past you from all points, in one

<sup>1</sup> [Subject—Lord Hotham's Judge Exclusion Bill.]

direction—towards the House. Then wigs and gowns appear; they tell you, with happy faces, their committees have adjourned; and then come a third class—the gentlemen of the press, hilarious. Why, what's the matter? Matter! Macaulay is up; and all the members are off to hear him. You join the runners in a moment, and are in the gallery to see the senators who had the start of you perspiring into their places. It was an announcement one hadn't heard for years; and the passing the word "Macaulay's up," emptied committee rooms now, as of old it emptied clubs. It was true; he was up, and in for a long speech; not a mere "spurt," but an oration. He was in a new place, standing in the second row (above the Treasury bench) from the table, and looking and sounding all the better for the elevation and the clearer atmosphere for orators which must be found in that little remove from the green boxes. The old voice, the old manners, and the old style—glorious speaking. Well-prepared, carefully elaborated, confessedly essayish; but spoken with perfect art and consummate management; not up and down, see-saw, talking off a speech, but the grand conversation of a man of the world, confiding his learning and his recollections, and his logic to a party of gentlemen, and just raising his voice enough to be heard through the room. That is as you heard him when you got in; but then he was only opening and waiting for his audience. As the House filled, which it did with marvellous rapidity, he got prouder and more oratorical; and then he poured out his speech with rapidity, increasing after every sentence, till it became a torrent of the richest words, carrying his hearers with him into enthusiasm (yes, for dry as was the subject he gave it grandeur by looking at it from the grand and historical point of view), and yet not leaving them time to cheer. A torrent of words—that is the only description of Macaulay's style when he has warmed into speed: and such words!—why, it wasn't four o'clock in the afternoon, lunch hardly digested, and yet the quiet reserved English gentlemen collected there to hear the celebrated orator were as wild with delight as an Opera-house after Grisi at ten.

You doubt it? See the division; and before Mr Macaulay had spoken you might have safely bet fifty to one that Lord Hotham<sup>1</sup> would have carried his bill. After that speech the bill was not thrown but pitched out. Speeches seldom do affect measures; and yet this speech will have altered British policy, on a great question, and—don't forget that—on a Wednesday, in a day sitting! People said when it was over that it was superb and so on, and one began to have a higher opinion of the House of Commons, though it is queerly “led,” seeing that if the Macaulay class of minds would bid for leadership, they would get it, and that, perhaps, the Lord Johns only get it, at present, by a sort of moral justice, because they work for it. But it wasn't all congratulation. Mr Macaulay had rushed through his oration of forty minutes with masterly vigour; and, looking at his massive chest and enormous head, you couldn't be surprised. That is the sort of man who would go through whatever he undertook. Yet the doubts about his health, which arise when we meet him in the street (he never meets anybody),—when you take advantage of his sphinx-like reverie,

“Staring right on, with calm, eternal eyes,”

to study the sickly face—would be confirmed, by a close inspection, on Wednesday. The great orator was trembling when he sat down: the excitement of a triumph—the massive head, notwithstanding—overcame him, and he had scarcely the self-possession to acknowledge the eager praises which were offered by the Ministers and others, in his neighbourhood. Evidently he had reasons for being as quiet as Gibbon was in the House; and in this case, too, no doubt, we must think enough will have been done for fame and for our pleasure, if the History is finished.

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for the East Riding.

## CHAPTER XVIII

India—The Cobden Motion—Lord J. Russell

*June 11.*

THIS supremely dull parliamentary week was to have been relieved last night by interpellations on the Turkish question; in the Lords at the instance of Lord Clanricarde, and in the Commons, on the motion of Mr Layard, whose *début* was expected with the interest which uncontrollable reading and visits to the British Museum compel; but the "public service" had to be consulted; and as Admiral Dundas had sailed from Malta for the Dardanelles, for reasons which nobody in this self-governed country knew anything about—not even Mr Layard, the only man in the House who can swear to the identity of Menschikoff—it was agreed to postpone all interrogatories about the matter, and to leave "business" to progress as it could. The Lords wasted three or four hours in lacerating Mr Keogh because, notwithstanding indiscreet speeches in Ireland, he readily accepted the offer to join an English Government; and the Commons busily employed five hours in getting "stages" of Bills on—no doubt serving the nation, certainly not amusing anybody.

The other Eastern question—the Government India Bill—has not become very engaging as yet. The speaking on Monday and Thursday was good, but hardly interesting. Mr Blackett,<sup>1</sup> who resumed the debate on Thursday, could not make a bad speech; but he has not yet so far trained his cleverness into the ways of the House as to talk in that relieved style which gratifies attention,—incidentally con-

<sup>1</sup> J. F. B. Blackett, M.P. for Newcastle-on-Tyne.

vincing, but first of all, interesting. Mr John Phillimore,<sup>1</sup> who resumed on Monday, was full of knowledge, which he poured out ceaselessly for three hours;—Sir Charles Wood not only makes but is the cause of long speeches. But Mr Phillimore is too forensic and rhetorical as yet, and must hit on a lower key if he wishes to become a parliamentary personage—which clearly he does. By-and-by, we shall get into real debates on India: for a rarity, we shall have a parliamentary discussion in which many unpledged votes will depend on the speaking. But up to this time it is prologue, and all the speaking, after Mr Bright's crushing reply to Sir Charles Wood, which delayed the bringing in of the Bill, was a mistake. Sir J. W. Hogg<sup>2</sup> was palpably premature in his elaborate defence of the body which he has so long and so astutely controlled; but, apart from that point, the defensive oration, as a speech to the jury, with that earnestness which would distinguish a distinguished counsel pleading for himself, was worthy of the cause and the occasion, and, had the House been otherwise than nearly empty, might have produced some effect to balance the conclusions accepted by a large majority from Mr Bright. The House was empty; it was emptied by Sir Charles Wood, filled only partially for Mr Bright, and has been kept empty up to last night, ever since. Mr Phillimore spoke for three hours, all about Sir Charles's 150,000,000 fellow subjects—and the 150,000,000 ought to know of these indications of interest in them—to about thirty men; Mr Blackett to about fifty; Mr Danby Seymour<sup>3</sup> to about twenty, including six Ministers; among them, Sir William Molesworth, as usual, asleep; Sir J. Hogg to about fifty; Mr Hume to the same number. On Monday there was no excuse for this slack attendance, but on Thursday there was; for wasn't it *the* Ascot night, and didn't the Opera-

<sup>1</sup> John George Phillimore, M.P. for Leominster. A learned jurist. He lost his seat in 1857, and died in 1865.

<sup>2</sup> Sir James Weir Hogg, M.P. for Honiton. A Director of the East India Company. He was made a member of the new Indian Council in 1858, and died in 1876.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Danby Seymour, M.P. for Poole.



lobby telegraph inform the loungers in those delightful precincts that it was only Wishy or only Washy; and who would go and hear Washy in reply to Wishy? And it should be understood that even those who did attend didn't pay attention. Thus Mr Hume spoke from his usual corner, and immediately below him, on the Treasury bench, sat Mr Strutt and Mr Robert Lowe; and the two officials were so remiss as to chat in utter indifference of the orator who was gesticulating over their heads, so that Mr Hume had to stop, losing his temper for the first time in his life, and to request them to leave their seats, causing a great scandal, tempered by much grinning, in which Mr Strutt excelled. As to Mr Danby Seymour, no one listened to him, and when Mr Blackett, at a later hour in the evening, apologised for and withdrew Mr Seymour's charge, that the *Globe* and *Morning Chronicle* were paid for their friendship by the Government, the House was not aware that any such accusation had been made. But they liked the news and the apology, and laughed at the appropriateness of Mr Blackett apologising for such an insinuation.

Other matters have interfered with the Indian debates. The season is at its height, and the Commons' House is full of young nobles who must dance, and dine, and do other things in the season; and then it is always a slack week during the Ascot races. The races ought to have accounted to Mr Cobden for the "No House,"—practically a count-out against Mr Cobden. The young nobles were all down on the Heath, and the middle-aged gentlemen of business who came down to Westminster, on Tuesday, to kill time between the hours when they had finished all their letters and interviews, and the hours when they could dine, did not need much persuasion from the Whips to go away again. Who wanted a House on that beautiful evening? No one! And the nation gained by the loss of a day. Mr Cobden, with his Pegu motion, would have uselessly raised the Indian question on an incidental point;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Cobden's "How Wars are got up in India," in his *Political Writings*.

and as to Mr Isaac Butt, with his motion for inquiry into the intimidating qualities of Irish priests, the discussion of such a question would have occasioned new mischief in religious contentions, which no letters of Lord Aberdeen in the way of snubs of Lord John Russell, would be able to allay. Mr Cobden would not, or could not, see these points; and with his usual tact, he confessed openly to his silly vexation, on Wednesday, and made complaints which everybody, and particularly our principal door-keeper Lord Charles Russell, heartily laughed at. It was a curious study, that evening between three and four, in the members' vestibule, to watch the manœuvres which so happily resulted. It is a great mistake to suppose the Government alone accomplished the "No House." Mr Hayter was warmly aided by the Opposition; even Mr Butt did not look, as he kept a respectable distance from the door, very anxious to provoke the inevitable war of bigots. Nobody, in fact, wanted to go in, but Lord Dudley Stuart, who had a police motion on the paper, in obedience to some of those wretched parochial importunities to which every metropolitan member is exposed; but Mr Cobden, who had a vast pile of papers under his arm, and was ready, after an evening's reading, to turn India inside out; and Mr Hume, who dreads a count-out with all his soul—for what can Mr Hume do—go to a casino?—when there is no House? These three gentlemen kept close to the door, expostulating with the guardians, who had got their orders, and had prorogued Parliament in defiance not only of all common sense, which is nothing, but of all the House's rules, which ought to be a great deal, and might cause their dismissal, if Lord John who has nothing else to do, were asked to go into the matter; and, of course, the body of members, who held back, determining not to be counted, enjoyed hugely the nervous group—haughtily indignant metropolitan member, expostulating Mr Cobden, alarmed Mr Hume, and sulky Mr Williams<sup>1</sup>—chief keeper of that post which is the opposite of St Peter's. The strangers loitering about

<sup>1</sup> [The door-keeper.]

wondered: this constitutional machinery was new to the enlightened Britons who, perhaps, could not understand why, as one could see the reporters' gallery full, the Speaker should insist on paying Lord Dudley Stuart the compliment of an attendance of at least forty—mystical number in senatorial architecture. But the innocent strangers must, indeed, have been shocked at the joyous yell which burst out when Mr Williams dashed the door open and appalled Mr Cobden by the announcement, "Who goes home?" A boys'-school cheer on the news of an unexpected half-holiday is the only parallel; but there was this difference, that the shout of gentlemen who needn't have spent an hour there if they didn't like, was mainly called forth by malicious satisfaction at the sight of the humbled Stuart, the ghastly and indignant Cobden, and the perplexed and melancholy Hume. It was wonderful to observe the feelings which succeeded after the laughter was open, and men had to begin to think their routine plans being bouleversed, what they should do with their evening. A large number didn't know; and walked off to their clubs to inquire of Jawkins, whom they were so sure to see there. But a large party, led by Serjeant Murphy,<sup>1</sup> was soon formed. "By Jove," said the Serjeant, with his usual happy inspiration, "let us run down the river and eat whitebait!" (Loud cries of hear, hear!) And so fifty senators soon filled a steamer, and in less than an hour were at whitebait, and brown bread and butter, and cold punch—criticising the career of Cobden, and wondering at the peculiar tastes of Hume. What could the constitutional waiters of Blackwall and Greenwich have thought of the Imperial Parliament?

The Oxford Installation has had something to do with the dulness of the week; certainly in the Lords, where they had nothing until last night, and as certainly in the Commons, where Mr Disraeli is not at his post—he only looked in for an hour on Thursday, but, of course, showed

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for County Cork. He was appointed a Bankruptcy Commissioner in 1853, and died in 1860. His portrait figures in Maclise's group of the "Fraserians."

last night, with the new dignity caught from the undergraduates' cheers—cheers *he* would be prouder of than of any "'Changes." In fact, there is only one thing people who take Parliament as their amusement have looked forward to, since the publication of the Aberdeen and Monsell letters—Mr Disraeli's criticism on the Cabinet squabble and Lord John's new position. Undoubtedly he has his chance now of a revenge on the Coalition which overthrew him; for they have been terribly weakened during the last fortnight. First, the symptoms of vacillation in our Eastern policy; next, Sir Charles Wood's insufficient measure and disastrous speech; thirdly, Mr Gladstone's (perhaps one should say more strictly, Mr James Wilson's) financial failure in the city; and lastly, the revelation the Aberdeen and Monsell correspondence afforded of Cabinet dissensions on a vital point with every British Government—their Irish policy. Why should Mr Disraeli spare Lord John? His own friends do not: the contemptuous insubordination rendering the long retention of the leadership by a man whose moral authority is gone, utterly out of the question. But the Peelites must not calculate that Lord John will be sacrificed to their vanity; Mr Disraeli has shown that he understands Lord Aberdeen's blunders at Constantinople, and he will show, in due time, that he has at last mastered the complexity of the reduction of the debt scheme, which has so miserably disappointed Mr Gladstone, and as completely and strangely fulfilled Mr Disraeli's haphazard predictions. Then Sir Charles Wood's speech—is it at all likely *that* will escape? Or the dockyard disfranchisement scheme? which, it turns out, was Sir James Graham's pure suggestion—to be regarded as a test of the tendencies of a Government pledged to Parliamentary "Reform." If it be true that the Cabinet is only kept together by the Queen's entreaty that the Turkish difficulty be not more perplexed by a "crisis" at home, the best thing Ministers can do is to leave Mr Disraeli unanswered,—or to put up Mr Osborne to reply without defending. But the sooner the Cabinet is rearranged the better: and if Lord John

thinks, as Mr Edward Ellice tells him, that his secession would destroy the Government,—that he can re-gather a party, and that Mr Gladstone has none yet—he had better try, if only for his own sake, with the least possible delay. The nation would make him a *Pont d'Or*: and St Nepomuck befriend him in the passage.



## CHAPTER XIX

Mr Keogh—The Ballot—Bright and Cobden on the Ballot—  
Sir Robert Peel

*June 18.*

NOBODY can regret more sincerely than Mr Keogh, that Mr Keogh is the parliamentary hero of this week, and is likely to be the hero of next week. His career and his political character have been forced on the attention of the world, and neither are in a condition to render him assured of a happy issue. The politician who commenced his political life at the Carlton, and is continuing it at the Reform, having intermediately passed across the stage as leader of the Irish Brigade, is in the position of one suspect to all parties; and when an unlucky accident forces a public investigation into so sinuous a life, it becomes a matter of difficulty to induce the careless public to comprehend the minute motives which compelled the tortuosity, and which, in all the vacillations, preserved the "personal honour"—which is always assumed to include the political. The public will not analyse; and if it is insisted that the public should think at all about Mr Keogh, the public necessarily comes to the conclusion that the man who started as a "Conservative Catholic," then became a Democratic Ultramontanist, and is finishing as law officer of the Government, which is neither Conservative, nor Catholic, Democratic, nor Ultramontane, and which positively refuses to do any one of the things Mr Keogh declares in "Dod" that he will do, and has declared out of doors would have to be done by any Government he joined—and who completes these inconsistencies in the short period between 1847 and 1853—may be a very clever, but cannot be a very reliable, or, politically, very lofty personage. There

is a question of the day about Mr Keogh, and that is the way it is likely to be answered. On Thursday he defied the Lords to the scrutiny; and as they were not very busy with other affairs, they readily accepted the challenge; and though Lords Eglinton<sup>1</sup> and Derby are in the ridiculous position of having undertaken to damage the character of a man to whom their own agents offered office, when they thought he could be useful, they have the resource of repudiating the agency, and are not likely to halt in their malignant commission of inquiry; for if they ruin Mr Keogh, they just now deal a heavy blow against the Government of Lord Aberdeen.

In the House of Lords Mr Keogh ran great risks in having his character ventilated. It is heavy odds, half-a-dozen Earls against a poor Q.C., particularly when the Q.C. has exposed himself on various points to the sneers of Peers who were never tempted. There is a different code for Peers and needy law officers. For instance, the Duke of Northumberland was loudly cheering the Earl of Derby, when the Earl of Derby was talking the chivalry of the question about Mr Keogh. But, supposing all Lord Westmeath's<sup>2</sup> assertions about Mr Keogh are correct, and granting that he is a political Proteus, how venial are his errors paralleled with the infamy of the Derby Admiralty doings in the dockyards! But the old Marquis of Westmeath did not prove his case; it was shattered to atoms in the course of half an hour's energetic common sense from the Duke of Newcastle; and thus, two nights' debates in the Upper House have resulted in the putting on record, and the supporting Lord Derby's opinion, that the appointment of Mr Keogh was an "unfortunate" one, and Lord Eglinton's opinion that the appointment was the "least reputable" one. In the Commons, it was very pleasant to hear Lord John reappear in his fine old character—"a real friend when you're in trouble," and stand up so heartily for Mr Keogh—in noble forgetfulness that through Mr Keogh he

<sup>1</sup> Lord Eglinton, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland under Lord Derby. In 1839 he held the famous tournament at Eglinton Castle, described in *Endymion*.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Westmeath, an Irish peer.

had been memorably insulted before all Europe by Lord Aberdeen. Every now and then, of late years, there is a *renaissance* about Lord John; and it is always when his manliness is evoked for a slandered colleague. He is a great party man: all of his party are his personal friends; and he would die for a colleague. The finest speech he has made these ten years was his magnificent burst, two days before he left office as Premier, in behalf of Lord Clarendon, then attacked (and on capital grounds) by this same Lord Naas, who is now Mr Keogh's assailant, and whom Lord John compared, in consideration that he was of the Irish propertied classes, and that Lord Clarendon's government had carried Ireland safely through a rebellion, to a skulker in the hold, who, when the fight was over, crept up on deck to criticise the captain. The same unexpected vigour was exhibited by Lord John on Thursday: and in his generous vindication, his contemptuous looks at Lord Naas, and his sneers at Lord Eglinton and Lord Derby, no one could have detected any trace of those feelings which must always be in Lord John's inmost mind when he thinks of Mr Keogh—the man whose cleverness and energy made the debates on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill destructive to the Whigs, the bill itself a dead letter and a farce, and a perpetual reproach to its author—the man, too, who had humiliated Lord John the other day by wringing from Lord Aberdeen an apology which was an insult to Lord John Russell. Of course, the Government benches cheered fast and furiously—it was delightful to them to find Lord John in such a splendid condition for fight; and then the spirit of party survives all coalitions and so long as a Whig is left, he will be found hallooing and hurrahing whenever there is a chance of seeing a Tory kicked; and Lord John's kicks at Lord Eglinton reminded them of good old days, when they had both measures and men. On the whole, therefore, Mr Keogh obtained a complete personal triumph: and it was no wonder, seeing that against his own practised tact were pitted no more startling antagonists than a clumsy stout-minded young lord, and the ungrammatical and deplorable

W. B. There is no doubt that the House was glad of the result, and that the congratulations Mr Keogh got in the lobby were hearty and sincere. There is not a more popular man in the whole club—the House of Commons; as, having been in every party, his personal acquaintance is, of course, extensive; and, wherever he may happen to be in politics, he doesn't lose the friends he makes. Everyone understands all about his career: they don't think him a Bayard; but they think, if he had been born to a great fortune he would have been a far more respectable statesman than Lord Derby: and, considering that it's the business of the country, and not of the House, to reward political virtue, and punish political vice, they fancy Mr Keogh and Ireland may be left to arrange with one another, and, meanwhile, like his society, are glad to see him getting a handsome salary, hope he'll soon get a safe permanent appointment, and, it's a pity, but it's a fact, would rather sit and hear Keogh for five days than Whiteside, or Napier, or other consistent bores, for five minutes. When Cato went down to the House at Rome he was going to an assembly which was in contact with the nation and was national—Roman nationality meaning something sublime; and when Cato walked to his place the young conscript fathers of forty looked at him with awe, no doubt; but the British House of Commons is not in contact with the nation, is the result of a limited suffrage, and shapes necessarily into a club, and has no high opinion of the nation, which it buys and sells; and in the British House of Commons, therefore, Cato would be counted out, and wouldn't be reported. Keogh, leading in the smoking-room, would set all the young conscript fathers, just in from Hampton races, roaring at Cato. And that being so, the Eglintons and Whitesides, who give themselves airs, and talk Catoism about a notoriously villainous public life, talk very palpable nonsense. Mr Disraeli's is, perhaps, the right view: Mr Keogh was an agreeable clever man; and Mr Disraeli could not see what obstacle there was to his acting in the same Government with Mr Keogh. Thus, if Mr Disraeli sees a vice in the

Coalition, it is a coalition of dull dogs. Were it really a coalition of "all the talents" he would admire it, for in that case he would not be left out.

Another hearable debate was on Tuesday, on the Ballot, when other Lord Naases used a similar argument—that it is un-English to get at the truth. Lord Naas blamed Mr Keogh because he had betrayed confidential communications in his own defence: and Mr Sidney Herbert blamed Mr Berkeley, because it was suggested that secret voting would get at the true opinions of the people of England; and, if an un-English system, would at least be preferable to the too British system of selling conscience for a few shillings and a day's drunkenness—the great characteristic of the existing electoral system, and of which the upholders of our wonderful Constitution are justly jealous. Mr Berkeley made a most amusing speech. True, the question, as he put it, was how we can remedy general national corruption; but he had to be heard, to keep an audience a little after dinner time, and this is the British and not a Roman Senate, and he was obliged to be amusing. It is no use, he, an old and clubable member of the club knows, adopting what Mr Cuffy called the "integrity dodge" in politics. Virtuous indignation is not his forte, and so he treated the question of national corruption in a light, pleasant style, which did not drive away the easy moralists—the members—until he had done, when, of course, they rushed from Sir John Shelley, who doesn't quite understand the club yet, and accordingly talks at his constituents—who must be delighted to see their member so active in the House, and who are of course honoured by his reputation as a first-class bore. Perhaps, as the country is to settle the question of corruption, sterner talk would, in the end, answer better than Mr Berkeley's jovial and careless flippancy; but as the purists seem to like democrats born among the aristocracy, and are no doubt convinced that Henry Berkeley holds exactly that moral position which enables him with effect to teach the people how to live, it was his business to show his wit—which he did—and his wit is very good—*il faut être homme blasé avant d'être*



*homme politique*—and as Mr Henry Berkeley, who is familiar with the tone of the governing classes, must have a high opinion of the democracy which worships those classes—sneers at the House of Lords come well from a son and brother and uncle to earls—it is easily conceivable that his bluff cynicism tells immensely on the House in June, when people are beginning to be weary of the Budget. It was hardly a good debate on the Ballot, for it was too argumentative, when all that was wanted was piquant illustration; and, on the whole, Mr Berkeley's was the best and most serviceable speech. He was happy in the accident which left reply to no more important personages than the Secretary-at-War and the Lord Advocate (of the Lord knows what). Mr Sidney Herbert is an elegantly feeble statesman, who reproduces the common-places of conversation and orthodox books with careful memory and in a nice voice; and having an immense property, and being a contingent Peer, his teasing but compact twaddle is invariably listened to with deference—nay, on Tuesday, when his plagiarisms of Sidney Smith on Ballot were so adroit as to be literal—with great “cheers and laughter.” But to the enlightened strangers, who were not bound to be well bred towards a statesman with £30,000 a year, it was painful hearing his speech, for probably more impertinent nonsense was never talked—it should be understood that Sidney Herbert quoted Sydney Smith only at dreary intervals, when the quotations specked, so as to show the Bæotian profundity of the parentheses. The greater part of an hour he devoted to showing that it was a delusion to suppose that the Ballot would really be a secret system; his argument was, that every man's vote would be known. Mr Cobden was in a hurry and nervous, and was intense on his own crotchets, or he might have annihilated the whole speech by the simple retort—if so, if the Ballot would make no practical change, why not let us have it? The other Ministerial speech was, in a different way, more absurd. Out of respect to Lord John, no doubt a “leader,” and opposed to the Ballot, only two Ministers who agreed with him spoke;

there appeared a tacit understanding that the Radicals of the Coalition were to be discreet and quiet. Sir William Molesworth accordingly going to sleep, and snoring audibly through Mr Herbert's wisdom; Mr Bernal Osborne sitting out the debate as spectator on the back benches of the Peers' gallery, where he was able to enjoy private cachinnation when Sir Robert Peel made the amicable reference to the "eccentric member for Middlesex;" Mr Bethell imitating Sir William as well as he could, but being active minded, not doing it very well; Sir Alexander Cockburn taking refuge in the smoking-room, chatting with congenial Mr Keogh, both of them turning up in time to record their opinions practically that Lord John Russell had talked nonsense. But the Lord Advocate! He was evidently put up, with faith in his powers, by Lord John. He rose with Sir Robert Peel; but the House would have the baronet and not the lawyer, and he had to wait; and then he got a hearing, and straightway proceeded to pour out fluent futilities in an abominable forensic way—further developing his incapacity for House of Commons position, in not only not adopting House of Commons style, but in making a set speech, which might have been made last year, ten years ago, or next year—which had no reference to the current debate, contained no reply to Peel, and was utterly disconnected from the events of the year and the arguments of the day. Lord John hear, heard: Mr Gladstone, just come in in very full dress from an evening party, did so too: Mr Gladstone is conscientious, and, having been absent all night, thought it was his business, as an "in," to cheer whoever might happen to be up: but the rhetorical Mr Moncrieff<sup>1</sup> was, nevertheless, a conspicuous failure, and had foolishly displayed to a full House his third-rate nature, which, well concealed, might have been talked of as second-rate—the which would be reputation for a Lord Advocate. His argument was the stale one, the only novelty being an unparalleled loud bow-wow delivery of it, that a voter for a member of Parliament

<sup>1</sup> He was raised to the Scottish bench as Lord Justice-Clerk in 1869. He was made an English peer in 1874, and died in 1894.

exercised a public trust akin to that of the member when he comes to vote for men and measures. Lord John Russell repeated this impudent sophistry; and Lord John, and the Lord Advocate, and the Secretary at War, spoke as if it were assumed that the question was a mere abstract question; as if, at this moment, the public trust of a vote was exercised conscientiously,—as if the people was universally an honest people,—and as if it was taken for granted by everybody that the country was a remarkably conscientious and free country, and national ruin would come if men were to “skulk” (Lord John’s word) from the profession of their political opinions; it being, to Lord John’s mind, more manly to be bullied and bribed than to be secretive, and more hypocritical not to tell how you voted than to vote against your convictions. But this twaddly triad was not well answered. Mr Bright certainly crushed Mr Sidney Herbert’s assumption that we had “progressed” in public spirit, and that there were no more Dukes of Newcastle doing what they liked with their own, by a detailed reading to the House of the famous London-derry correspondence about the County of Down, and Mr Bright would have gone on to make a splendid speech, as usual, if there had been time; but it was one in the morning, and the young Lords’ and old Lords’ retainers, whom he had insulted by divulging the truths of the county system which sustained them, were noisy and restive, and Mr Bright is getting cautious, and has lost his old partiality for talking amid Tory yells and hootings, and so he closed abruptly, and his speech stands as a truncated oration addressed only to one part of the question. Mr Cobden’s was an inexpressibly unwise speech: in every particular a mistake; but one specimen suffices. His peroration was a declaration that there was no cure for bribery but the ballot; and he would, consequently, oppose an extension of the suffrage if the ballot did not accompany it. That is Mr Cobden’s faith in the masses of England! It is a revelation of his real, undoubtedly not Radical, nature. The accidents of the question of free trade made Mr Cobden a popular leader: but he never had any business in

connection with the working classes. Essentially a middle-class man, and a political economist, not a politician, he has no sympathy whatever with the masses, and, in fact, heartily at once fears and contemns them. And other quasi Democrats talk from the same point of view. Extension of the suffrage is asked on one ground, because it is prudent to make scoundrel constituencies so numerous that they would be too many to buy, and would, consequently, have no temptation to dishonesty; and in the same way, the Ballot, which is simply a machinery to protect the impressionable, is asked because it would prevent bribery—the calculation being that when you are not sure of the vote you won't pay a price for it. Mr S. Herbert answered that queerly for a bold Briton, proud of his nation—"Why," said he, "that is not sound; for when a gentleman wanted to get into Parliament, he'd make a bargain with the voters, and pay them only on condition that he was returned, so that corruption would be increased, and you would not only have men bribed as now, but you would add another iniquitous system, by which it would be the interest of every man bribed to canvass and offer bribes for the votes of others." How much this sort of reckless and foolish talk injures the cause of British democracy, may be ascertainable by-and-by; but let us hope it is exceptional talk, and that there is left a school of Liberals who do not believe, because there is a large percentage of scamps in the towns, and of poltroons in the counties, that therefore there is not a true and pure mass among the people, who would compel good government in England, without the protection of the ballot-box. Sir Robert Peel made a speech for the Ballot, which would justify a revolution: but Sir Robert's orations are only amusing, not important; he is droll, not a statesman. Proprietor of Tamworth, he despises corruption: and he thinks that the landed interest need not be afraid of the Ballot, because "property, sir, will always have its influence." In other words, if you buy up a place, and every voter is your tenant, you're sure to have the majority. But that's not altogether Sir Robert's point of view about the Ballot; he

knows that his demure brother—it is the fraternity of Duke Robert and Henry Beauclerc—votes against the Ballot, and that is enough to ensure Sir Robert's vote *for*. As Coleridge said of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, that each was the half of a perfect man, so it may be remembered, that if the natures of Robert and Frederick Peel were conjoined, we should have a perfect statesman. Separated, each is afflictingly incomplete: Frederick all reason:—someone asked once if he was the head of the family, and was answered, No, he is only the brains—and Robert all passion; the steam boiler in one place, and the wheels and cranks in the other, motionless and resultless for want of connection with the steam. Sir Robert is the greater success of the two in the House; he is a “character,” and has a recognised position, succeeding, in some degree, to the now-silent place of the decaying Sibthorp. He is an “independent member;” that is, no one knows how he'll vote until they see him in the lobby. He occasionally joins the standard of the Earl of Derby; but he has no particular rule in politics, beyond that of balancing the Peel interest by always plumping against his brother. He is a Liberal Conservative: and he understands that to mean—voting to-day with the Whigs, and to-morrow with the Tories: occasionally digressing in favour of Radicalism, as on Tuesday. He was in favour of the Ballot; and described the Ballot as preferable to open voting, because it is “a free and easy, and effective system:” but the first two adjectives sufficiently explained his hopes:—he would have the country “free,” but only on condition that it's “easy” as well. Sir Robert represents the free-and-easy interests; that is the style of thought and talk. He's the free-and-easiest orator in Parliament; he stands with one hand in his pocket, and he twirls a cane in the other,—sometimes varying the gesture by twirling his moustache. He gives solemn advice to the country gentlemen—a sagacity he derives, perhaps, from studying his father's career—to give way on the Ballot now, gracefully, because, gracefully or not, they would be certain to have to do it in a few years. He said the



Ballot was the Cape Horn of politics—and that was taken as a *mot*, and Sir Robert grinned heartily with the grinning House; and he particularly advised Sir James Graham not to make such a fuss about this, as, having swallowed every other political nostrum, surely he needn't stick at this. That is Sir Robert's fun; and he fancies that when the House roars at his brusqueries it is laughing with him, and in no degree *at* him, which is surely a mistake. He was very funny on Lord John—some people thought it was sheer impudence—but the House didn't stop to inquire if it was respectful, and laughed unreservedly; a noticeable sign that Lord John is going down.

But Sir Robert only led himself out of the country party into the ballot lobby. Lord John following, but not noticing the erratic baronet, had put his elbows into his hands, trotted out Sidney from that eternal scaffold, mentioned Sir John Eliot (he has taken to that patriot since he married into the Mintos), invoked vigour, candour, and openness in public affairs and public trusts, and suggesting, in reply to Mr Bright, that the Massachusetts convention had not yet made up its mind about secret voting, very solemnly concluded—"Well, then, let us pause." (Loud cheers from the Whigs.) And then Lord John sat down. That is the great Whig policy. Conventions are being held in Massachusetts, while corruption is eating into the heart of England; and Lord John adjures the House of Commons "to pause." And the House paused accordingly; and the character of the division would appear to be this—because Massachusetts is not decided, England suspends her opinion about the question of open as against secret voting. Mr Bright is responsible for putting the idea into Lord John's head.

## CHAPTER XX

The India Bill—Lord Stanley—Lowe

June 25.

"POOH—pooh! why should I give way? Want to go home early? Of course he does. So do I; and I'm twenty years older." Mr Hume thus expressed himself at about six yesterday evening, in reply to the countless applications made to him to let Mr Macaulay speak first. Mr Hume had adjourned the debate (India Bill) from Thursday: and Mr Hume had got the right to have the House first; and Mr Hume is an obstinate man, who cannot perceive the advantage of following Mr Macaulay in a grand debate. Mr Canning said that Mr Hume was an extraordinary ordinary man; and in no respect is his commonplace more marvellous than in the belief that public speaking is his forte. The House doesn't agree with him; and as his infelicitous firmness was bruited about he became very unpopular. Great crowds were down about the House awaiting Macaulay, and they Oh—oh'd, and cried, "Macaulay, Macaulay!" when Mr Hume got up; but it was of no use—Mr Hume floundered sedately and contentedly into *medias res*; and the House emptied spitefully, and did not return in great numbers, for there was no longer a certainty about the great member for Edinburgh, and at least it was hoped he would be mute till dinner was over. But he wouldn't; he waited patiently on Mr Hume, and followed, in a not crowded but respectfully eager House, with a speech which was undoubtedly excellent from its point of view, but has disappointed the expectation of everyone but Ministers. He delighted Ministers and dissatisfied everybody else. Broken down

in health, uncontrollably nervous, and unable to sustain the pitch of his voice, we are hardly to look now for those vividly brilliant Macaulay orations, to hear which was a grand intellectual luxury; and certainly not, when the orator happens to be on the unpopular side, defending a bill, for no more precise reason, it is probable, than that he is the editor of it. Still it was a fine defence, abounding in suggestions, and rich in the resources of informing illustration: but it was not Macaulayish,—it was cold, tame, and rather businesslike, and reminding of the old style, or of the style in which he spoke three weeks ago on Lord Hotham's Exclusion of Judges' Bill, only here and there, as in the hearty scholarly vindication of academical distinctions, and in the review-like assault on Lord Ellenborough. Cheered at such passages he was warmly and delightedly; but, for the most part, his speech did not tell and the impression he produced was that he had missed the great occasion to stamp his name on Indian legislation out of mere personal considerations for the comfort of bureaucratic Whigs and the curry-powder classes. The great effort was frigidly talked about and cruelly criticised; and the conclusion to which observation led was that Mr Macaulay, for the first time in his life, had not made a hit where he had aimed. That event gave a dull tone to the evening; members went off dissatisfied to smoke; mild Mr Blackett, who next went in to win, and did (with the members of the Indian Reform Association); jaunty Lord Jocelyn<sup>1</sup> (trying to get back among the Peelites and on the way to an Indian Presidency,—for which he prepares himself by copious blue books—that being his view of a statesman's education); objectless Mr Otway<sup>2</sup> (who was rotundly inconclusive); ardent Mr Adderley<sup>3</sup> (who thought that he had a good right to speak about India, seeing that the Cape is half-way); and maundering Mr Mangles<sup>4</sup> (who announced that he was breaking for the first time the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Jocelyn, the son of Lord Roden. He died in 1854.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Otway, M.P. for Stafford.

<sup>3</sup> C. B. Adderley, afterwards Lord Norton. He died in 1906.

<sup>4</sup> R. D. Mangles, M.P. for Guildford, a Director of the East India Company. He was appointed a member of the new Indian Council in 1858, and died in 1877.

silence of twelve years, and induced a regret at his precipitancy);—all spoke, in due succession of orderly dulness, to a thinner House than would be got on a great railway bill. It was mortifying, but what was to be expected? Two of these gentlemen were showing, in elaborate essays, in which they solemnly dogmatised, that Parliament ought not to legislate, because Parliament was ignorant of the question; and the two others, the possible Indian President and the actual Director, were arguing that Parliament was not ignorant, and proved their case by declaring that “the honourable gentlemen below the gangway” (meaning the Indian Reform Society’s members) were in the crassest unconsciousness of what they had been talking about. The House could not find enjoyment in the dissertations of theorists, or the simulations of “practical” men, who look on the 150,000,000 merely as animals who are to be governed, or as men who are machines for the contribution of revenue; and by the time Mr Mangles had compensated for his prolonged and commendable taciturnity by the most terrible reaction remembered by Mr Shaw Lefevre, it was one in the morning, and the debate had to be adjourned—most of the potent personages having yet to declare themselves.

Likewise on Thursday, when it was known early that Macaulay would not speak till yesterday, and then the first thing, and when, consequently, all the other pretentious orators made up their minds, like discreet men, not to anticipate a person who was going to speak to posterity, and would therefore have it in his power to hand down those whom he attacked to eternal contempt, there were all the indications of the correctness of the theory advanced here some weeks ago—viz., that there is in England profound public indifference to Indian affairs, and that, but for the opportunity which they might offer for party devices, Ministers, whether with a good or a bad bill, would have *carte blanche* to deal with the dusky 150,000,000 just as the Yorkshire squire, Sir Charles, who is ruler over them, might happen to like. Last night there was at first a good House, because there were great

speakers expected. On Thursday there were not 100 members present at any period of the debate, because second-rate, or at least second-class men, were to be competing for the Speaker's eye. And the Tories were on thorns, for they are at last perceiving that Mr Disraeli is splitting them up into two camps, and they were not certain—the meeting at Lord Derby's not having been quite successful—whether they ought not to go into the country, and so get out of the dilemma in which they were placed between young Stanley and old Herries. Inglis is always nearer Russell than Disraeli now: his orthodoxy has been alarmed for some time by that terrible chapter in the Bentinck biography, which adjured Sir Robert Inglis to be grateful to the Jews because they effected the crucifixion! and his spiteful speech—the idea of being led by a young fellow of twenty-six—absurd!—did not make much impression. But Herries did: that is, what was heard, for that gentleman has a faculty for talking confidentially with the clerk at the table, and makes no exciting displays; and, no doubt, it was a question, after that statesman's snub of the aspiring Stanley, whether the decorous Tories ought to cast ridicule on their party by voting on an Indian Bill in the teeth of the man whom, when they were in power, they made President of the Board of Control.

The speeches on Thursday were worth a better House. Lord Stanley had an audience of about thirty; he spoke athwart the dinner-hour—and his party is the dining-out party—yet Lord Stanley spoke very well. Trained in the art of public speaking, he knows how to make adroit use of the ample materials always available to one in his position. But his good speaking is confined to his matter and to his style. He labours under terrible disadvantages of manner. Someone said lately of him that he was a Demosthenes who *kept* the pebbles in his mouth, and that is a very good description of a very dreadful voice, to which, however, you get accustomed, so at least as to catch all the words, and it may, therefore, be practicable for him to get a House of Commons position, for when a man has



always the same audience, the audience ceases to notice what at first are repulsive peculiarities. He cannot conquer this natural defect—a defect which would have kept most men to their libraries and country walks. But he has other defects, which do not indicate that Lord Derby is as good a trainer as he should be. Lord Stanley gesticulates with his head. Fancy Costa, having lost his *bâton* and making use of his head, and you get an exact idea of Lord Stanley suiting the one action to every word. It's ridiculous, but the House gets used to that too; and tells Lord Stanley when it meets him in the lobby that he is a great orator; even, with the usual tendency of the world, to set father against son, contesting colloquially that he is the Pitt to the Chatham. The Fox on this occasion—on this India Bill—was Mr Robert Lowe; and as he spoke, speculative strangers following him, continued the inquiry how far natural disadvantages can be overcome by orators. These were two successful public speakers, yet successful despite of remarkable physical drawbacks. Lord Stanley has a split palate, and Mr Robert Lowe is all but blind; yet there these two men were—and very few noticing the peculiarity—the principal debaters on one of the greatest questions that could occupy—and intimidate away—a British Senate. Mr Lowe was actually debating, answering point by point, an antagonist, whom he could see just as little as he could see the 150,000,000—quoting and making reference to papers, which he could only read with the assistance of a microscope, which appears brought down to him with his red box. It was an odd duel—a blind speaker replying to a speaker with a slit palate: but it was a very interesting one. Mr Lowe crowded into one hour every argument expanded by Sir Charles Wood into five; and it is to Sir Charles's credit that he appreciated the speech, and wasn't a bit jealous—he chuckled, spluttered and suggested, and pulled by the coat-tails, gleefully—and, with his celebrated tact, always at the wrong time. So did the other Ministers enjoy the speech, which was a masterpiece of concise and compact reply; and so did the forty or fifty who kept the three or four Ministers in

countenance—the three or four Ministers trying not to look ashamed of the British Senate in the presence of the Hindoo magnates who were sitting in the gallery to see how the 150,000,000 fared. Mr Phinn, who succeeded to Mr Lowe, made a good speech too:—a practised barrister on the right side generally does. Mr Phinn is always making good speeches now; and is always getting up to catch the Speaker's eye; and is being set down as a rising man. The third important speaker on Thursday, was Mr H. Baillie, Tory ex-Secretary to the Board of Control, Who'll follow Baillie? was a general inquiry while he was talking—the usual sign that he was not making way; and the conclusion was, that the debate would be adjourned—for who would face a House of thirty or forty listless men with a great speech, small speeches on so "vast" a subject being of course out of the question? But no; one was astonished to see the Tory ex-President of the Board of Control following the Tory ex-Secretary of the Board of Control. What bad taste, said everyone; but it wasn't; it was quite correct: the Tory ex-President of the Board of Control followed because he was going to reply to his ex-Secretary. And he did, and was loudly and chucklingly cheered by Sir Charles Wood, and suavely smiled at by Lord John. After that, Mr Disraeli must have felt his arrows blunted for impromptu taunts upon Ministerial confusion. An age of coalition is clearly beginning to mean an age when everybody is to vote against everybody.

## CHAPTER XXI

### The Eastern Question—The Admiralty Scandal

*July 2.*

IF Englishmen would study their country in its aspects this week, they might be in danger of reaching the conclusion, that for the present it is not a country to be immensely proud of.

Prominently, the conversations on Thursday, in Lords and Commons, as to when debates on the Russo-Turkish question are to take place, should attract the attention of an enlightened public. Next, some observation is due to the proceedings in the Commons on Tuesday, when, furnishing new proofs that it is a club, and not a national senate, party tactics succeeded among indifferent members in shirking a great question—was it true (as Mr Drummond's amendment alleged), that all Boards of Admiralty administrate their department in a corrupt spirit? Then the list of minor questions, occupying the week, is remarkable. On Wednesday, a bill was brought in to diminish the scandal of Simony in the National Church. On Tuesday, Mr Collier<sup>1</sup> obtained a great parliamentary success, which no one ever anticipated, by a comprehensive speech on the villainies of our Ecclesiastical Courts. Another three hours, on the same day, were devoted to a consideration of the expediency of legislative interference to check the enormous mortality consequent upon improper systems of labour in our factories and mills. The hideous extent of juvenile delinquency has, conspicu-

<sup>1</sup> R. P. Collier, M.P. for Plymouth, afterwards Attorney-General. This appointment as a paid Judge of the Judicial Committee in 1871 gave rise to much controversy as being contrary to the spirit of the Act constituting the Judgeship. He died in 1886.

ously, been another topic. Altogether, though we have got rid of the remainder of the petition committees, there is nothing in the "business" of the parliamentary week to suggest national pride.

A great nation is to be kept in suspense as to the chances of a great war, because Lord John Russell has gone sick to bed! Europe may tremble: but Lord John must cure a diarrhoea. Trade may stop: but Lord John must have his chalk mixtures. Well, if the great and self-governing, enlightened nation is content, why not? Certainly, when Peel disappeared, the country kept itself up. Certainly, when Wellington died, the funds did not greatly descend. And we have still in the House of Commons Lord Palmerston, who does know one or two things about foreign affairs. But we can't do without Lord John; no, we cannot get through a foreign policy debate without Lord John. You would not suppose that from the talk in society about him; from the way the House pours out when he rises; from the sneering negatives about him in the journals. But we know his value; and crave for Cincinnatus from Richmond: at least the postponement of Mr Layard's motion, which turns up with as much difficulty as a Nineveh monument—from Friday till Monday, and over Monday, perhaps, again—was taken as a matter of course; the tone almost indicating that if the Queen had requested a prorogation because Lord John wanted rest, the Commons would have ordered cabs and gone to the railways meekly. In the Lords, on Thursday, the postponement of Lord Clanricarde's<sup>1</sup> motion was put upon different grounds, but upon grounds just as slightly complimentary to a self-governing people. Because a mystery balances an impertinence: the "public service," the ready friends of fidgety and weak Lord Clarendon, suggested to the feignedly coy Lord Clanricarde, might be injured by a discussion: but why? The people are regarded by the Peers just as Rabelais' poulettes were regarded by the cook; they may object to being either boiled or roasted, when the cook puts to them which process they will pre-

<sup>1</sup> A motion with regard to the Eastern Question.

fer, and the cook's comment on the answer is, that it is not to the point: the English nation is to be permitted by the Peers to discuss the measures of the Government after the Government has acted—may recommend peace when we are in the midst of war, or may demand war after disgraceful conditions of peace have been conceded by the Government. The English nation must be convinced that it is a fine thing to have representative institutions, and to be self-governing; and the self-government is illustrated in the Cabinet crisis hanging over our heads this ten days, some saying that Lord Aberdeen had resigned, and some saying that he had not, and neither party being believed, and the people having no say whatever in the business; and if we were to have our rulers changed from an austere intriguer to an intriguer who is not austere—which is the ambition of young Toryism—nobody being entitled to declare a preference, except, of course, the very responsible sovereign who is well known to be determined towards an amicable alliance with Louis Napoleon for the purpose of crushing Russia, and who, therefore, is not afraid of a war, and consequently, not disposed to sacrifice national interests to the interests of the Coburgs and the Orleanists. Self-government may also be illustrated in a consideration of the course taken on the India Bill. Everybody who is of any weight disapproves of this bill; but the House of Commons consists of the delegates of the governing classes, and there is not a family of the governing classes which has not some distinct direct or indirect interest in sustaining the misgovernment of India; and the result is, that a bill to continue indefinitely the villainies of British governing classes in India is to be passed, with a few modifications, by an overwhelming majority.

But to come to proper, however unpatriotic, conclusions as to that crack West-End club, the House of Commons, we must look minutely to its workings on Tuesday night, in relation to Mr Keating's proposal of a vote of censure on the Earl of Derby's Board of Admiralty. Let us look back and recollect the origin of the discussion. When Lord Derby, last summer, made his reluctant appeal to the



country, all that Tory corruption could do was done to obtain a favourable new Parliament. Mr Stafford, the Secretary to the Admiralty, and to whom the First Lord handed all that sort of management, made desperate efforts to use his official influence for his party's political purpose; and his sins having been partly acknowledged, after equivocations, and partly discovered, a committee was this year appointed by the new House of Commons to inquire into his proceedings, and this committee reported to the House that all the allegations were true; that Mr Stafford had corruptly and dishonourably erased an order which regulated promotions in the dockyards; had corruptly and dishonourably canvassed in the dockyards for his political friends; had corruptly and dishonourably given a dinner to his political friends, and charged that dinner to the expenses of his official department. This report was severe; but in the public estimate a more direct censure would have been justified by the destructive evidence elicited by the committee. The report was read at the bar of the House—and then? In the simple popular apprehension impeachment was a natural thing to follow; at least the voluntary retirement of Mr Stafford into private life was expected. The Duke of Northumberland, Mr Stafford's First Lord, had long been guessed corrupt in a negative way; he had not been criminal; he had only been—unwise; but so unwise that some public apology, by himself or by his friends, was to be anticipated. Nothing of the kind. The evening of the report, Mr Stafford sauntered about jauntily, Mr Disraeli did not look abashed, the Government grinned, the Radical patriots frowned, the House was indifferent; the report was to be a dead letter. A young member, not familiar with the *morale* of the club, comes forward, and proffers himself as public prosecutor. But he could only give notice of motion: after Easter, notices of motion, are confined to Tuesdays, and for place on Tuesday every notice has to ballot with competitors; so that Mr Keating had to wait till Tuesday last, and was then third or fourth on the list. It was a charge that a great department had betrayed its trust—that the

Navy had been sold to the Carlton Club; and club, if not general, excitement and interest would have been in due course. The nation did not know the matter was coming on; the club was excited simply as to the best means of getting rid of the business without further scandal. Driven to a vote, the majority in the House would probably carry the motion; or, worse, carry Mr Drummond's characteristic amendment;<sup>1</sup> but everyone in the House, Sir Benjamin Hall and Mr Keating excepted, wanted to avoid a vote. The club doesn't like that sort of question: and it is an understanding between all parties, and tacitly there was an understanding between Government and the Tory Opposition on Tuesday, that the Keating class of innocents is not to be encouraged—the club's dirty linen of that description, being best washed and dried in the smoking-room. But Mr Keating displayed moral courage in giving the notice; and he displayed the same quality in insisting on bringing it on. He was pumped in the lobby, wheedled in the House, bullied everywhere; but on he would bring his motion. Matters then looked serious for Mr Stafford, on Tuesday; but he is so rich, so clever, and such a doosed good fellow, the club couldn't allow him to be harmed; and Mr Disraeli hit upon a method of evasion, which was perhaps a desperate resource, and not quite worthy of a responsible statesman—he determined to trick Mr Keating out of the vote. He collected and talked confidentially with his solemnest tones; Lord John Manners undertook to speak an hour or two on the Factory motion, which preceded Mr Keating's; and Mr Edward Ball, a lym-phatic Lablache, groaned deep acquiescence, and engaged to save the Conservative party by employing the House, and keeping off Keating. "Keep Keating off till eleven," was the word passed, "and then he can't go on, it will be too late." Ball groaned, and Manners lisped, pursuant to promise; and by their displays justified Mr Disraeli's selection of them, as the most tedious and insipid of orators; but at last came eleven o'clock, and worse, the House, which seemed to have faith in Keating's resolution,

<sup>1</sup> [That *all* Boards were alike corrupt.]

was filling—Covent Garden and Pall Mall electric telegraph having notified to mourning senators that Ball was down, that Manners had given way. What was to be done? Mr Disraeli, in a by-the-by way, suggested that it was late, somewhat too late, for that full discussion which he and his friends desired; perhaps Mr Keating would consent to a postponement? “Yes,” said Mr Keating, “if the Government will give me a day.” “Exactly,” said Mr Disraeli. “Pray, Lord John” (knowing Lord John wouldn’t) “give Mr Keating a day.” “Really,” mumbled Lord John, “India—Budget—Education—must prorogue before Christmas: can’t, indeed.” What more important than the House’s censure of corrupt administrators? But Lord John takes the club view, and regarded Mr Keating as a bore, and had already acquitted Mr Stafford’s personal honour. In that case, then, Mr Keating would go on; and amid the miserably malignant cries of “Oh oh,” and the baffled scowls of a corrupt faction, on Mr Keating went, with creditable equanimity, in well-bred repose of manner, and with an honest determination to say the truths he had made up his mind to tell. He told them, in great detail, but the detail was necessary to the force of the charge; and despite the continuous roars at him from the one side, and the still more vexatious restive carelessness of the other, Mr Keating did not finish till he had satisfied himself that he had done his duty. This was after midnight. Sir John Pakington was put up by Mr Disraeli as a good available bore. With unaffected truth Sir John Pakington declared that he could not debate—that he was incapable—that his party was incapable of an off-hand reply to a speech: this being a plea for delay. The party cheered. The Government smiled. Mr Disraeli was vexed. And then Sir John went into a lengthy, ejaculatory gossip about the late Government in general and the Duke of Northumberland in particular: not a glimmer of a reply to Mr Keating—not a trace of a conception of the gravity of the accusation; and this took till after the first small hour. Then comes Mr H. Drummond with a well-known Parliamentary red-herring—an amend-

ment to the effect that the pot was disintitiled by his own colour to sneer at the blackness of the kettle—that all Boards of Admiralty were alike corrupt. A still graver accusation; but loud cheers; the cheers of people who have escaped a dilemma from the Tories—loud laughter from the Ministerialists. Odd; but, as it was said, H. Drummond “does hit home so.” On the whole, the club was in raptures with Henry Drummond; he had given Mr Disraeli a splendid card to play. But Mr Disraeli, who on this occasion evinced remarkable capacity for party leadership, was sagacious enough to see that it was a card which would keep; and he accordingly passed the word to play the rest of the pack first. Hence the appearance of nobody after nobody out of the Tory ranks, with motions for adjournment of the House, of the debate, of everything, anything; the white vests and white neckcloths, tipsy, as is the rule of the young patricians of the club after eleven, were quite reckless, so they could get Stafford off. And they did. At two, Lord John had gone home, and the lead of the House began to be rational; and easy Lord Palmerston gave way; and the House was wearied, of divisions, and it was, then, very fine to hear Mr Disraeli, as he threw back his coat flaps and put himself into the attitude of a conqueror, agree to the adjournment, intimating that he would regard the division (for and against going home) as a division for and against the Derby Board of Admiralty. The effrontery was sublime, the more that it succeeded, and *did* effectually get rid of the question—Mr Keating not having that weight in the land which would render his accusatory oration of consequence to the Tories. It was a hard-fought and an exciting sight; and the white vests and white neckcloths—(why will young politicians, knowing their faces will be crimson at midnight, wear such garments?)—went home in the cool morning light, well content with themselves and the club, and with a profound heartily-expressed aversion for “snobs,” who, like Sir Benjamin Hall and Mr Keating, will not permit a “fellow” to do what he can for his party. And of what avail is it, after such a set of scenes, such a

tactique, such an exhibition of lax political morality, to assure the club that, though it is careless and corrupt, the country condemns? The Duke of Northumberland will return his members in the north, and Mr Stafford will give his dinners in the west, just as usual; and what cares either for the abstract head-shaking of a great nation which believes it is self-governed, and is proud of its representative institutions?



## CHAPTER XXII

India—Bright—Disraeli—Sir James Graham

*July 9.*

WHEN, at two this morning, Lord John Russell, his elbows in his hands, his voice at its tiniest, that is, highest key, and all his phrases being solemnly broadened for effect (thus for instance—"they aagsaample awf Anglaand")—was eloquently assuring the senate and the world (not calculating that of late the reporters don't write)—was showing that Great Britain was deeply interested in India, and had conferred (as compared with the government of Alexander) the greatest blessings on the "anhaabitaants of Aandia,"—when Lord John, amid the assiduous cheers of Mr Robert Lowe and Sir Charles Wood, was talking to this effect, one contradictory circumstance was very noticeable—a third of the House was asleep, and the rest was yawning. The British Senate was bored with India, and wanted to go to bed. The British Senate was perfectly aware that the British Government of India has been the British plunder of India; and that the intent and very probable consequence of the vote it was about to give would be to hand over the people of India to another decade of villainous oppression. But the British Senate was bored with the subject, wanted to go to bed, and therefore could with difficulty maintain a decent suppression of weariness while Lord John was sounding the praises of the British Senate, and rhetorically arguing against a contingent two years' agitation, which might turn up Hindoo Hampdens and Mohammedan Sidneys; and the British Senate, conscious of the dishonesty of its intended vote, could not, nevertheless, be bothered with a protracted session, and a

possible new crisis, so handed over the 150,000,000 to another generation of satraps who are only clerks, and warriors who are only engineers. Did this, too, without a twinge, remarking only, as it lighted its cigar as it went out after the division to go home,—“By Jove, it's grand to have India done with at last.” That is the observable tone of these memorable debates, and of this great historic occasion throughout. Mr Bright and Mr Disraeli have in turn had the hardihood to declare that the House of Commons has proved itself, at this point in its annals, unworthy of the mighty trust which it has inherited from the great Englishmen who built up the British Empire; and tacitly, that dishonourable desertion of sacred functions is admitted, and should be made the most of by commentators who, like the writer of this, seek to convert the House of Commons, by radical reform, from an aristocratic club into a national convention. It has, in fact, been used as an argument against delay by Sir Charles Wood (who did not know that Lord John would threaten Parliament with an agitation), that a House is not to be got together on India, and that, while we have so careless a public, a postponement of legislation for two years would bring us practically no nearer either knowledge or earnestness. The debate has been a protracted one, not because of the excitement of the subject, but because there is an Indian Reform Society, whose committee is oratorical, and because there are Secretaries and ex-Secretaries of Boards of Control who have regarded it as their duty to speak on an average of two hours each to audiences of tens and twenties and to stenographers reposing on the belief that Great Britain would not buy papers for the sake of essays on Hindostan. On any night of the debate, the House could (from five to ten o'clock) have been counted out; and it is only a miracle that one of the Scullys, considering their country neglected, did not make that numerical observation, which the Speaker always regards as the most pointed of the week. Great Britons, who have a belief in the blessings of Great Britain to dark-haired races in different parts of the world, may not be eager to recognise the fact of the

day—that, as Mr Disraeli said, the good government of India has been sacrificed to the temporary convenience of a Cabinet in a hurry: but there the fact remains—for use by the classes who consider that England has never gone out to conquer but for revenue, and has never kept a conquest but for patronage.

As members of the House of Commons went home on Friday morning, after the most perplexing division of a perplexed session, the talk was not of the people of India, but of the parties of England; and the results in this direction will monopolise metropolitan attention too. The division is the conclusive chaos of political confusion; and we may now expect the work of re-creation to commence. Mr Disraeli has completed his most meritorious labour—he has destroyed the country party. When he so graphically sketched Thuggee on Friday morning, why did he not see that he was but reminding the House of the great Tory Thug? There now, prostrate, lies Derbyism—Lord Stanley chief mourner, Stafford and Mackenzie mutes. When Lord Derby was speaking his dying speech as Premier, he sketched the state of parties, and he announced his own following as 300 gentlemen, vowed to his banner (the tablecloth on which Mr Stafford gave the private dinner the public paid for). Marmion, gashed and bleeding, and solitary in the Lords, cried “On” to Stanley in the Commons; and Stanley collects his knights in St James’s Square dining-room, where the enlightened British people is so often served up; and the knights, out of habit, obey the young trumpet, answer the summons, and then leisurely ride into the camp of the Scotch foe who heads the Coalition. Lord Derby leads the Tories one way, and Mr Herries beckons the Tories another way; and the Tories follow Mr Herries, as the wise and more reliable leader. “The idea of a young fellow of twenty-five leading us,” said the Tory interest, credulous of Herries; and so Lord Stanley was snubbed, and Mr Disraeli flouted. But it is to be remarked that Mr Disraeli can feel no surprise at the catastrophe, and perhaps glories in it. He has sedulously

separated himself from his old party, since Christmas; and in his Thursday's speech he plainly spurned the ancient-ways Tories, sneering at Sir Robert Inglis, at whom there was "a laugh," and actually repudiating the presumed right of Herries to speak of the past intentions of the Derby Government as to India. Mr Disraeli is in search of a new party, and on Thursday he threw off all disguise. On the Church Rates and on the Jews he led the quasi-Tory party against Lord Derby. On this occasion, he leads the Tory rump, with Lord Derby approving, and Lord Stanley as tentative thin end of the wedge. The Carlton Club, though it is doubtful, may understand all this; but the outsiders have only to look on with bewildered astonishment, and to hope that Mr Disraeli sees his way; meanwhile, exulting in the disappearance of a party which only succeeded in the disreputable, and only for a time in that, and which was not recommended, as an intellectual confederation, by the lead of one of the most incapable nobles who ever got pre-eminence in the most stupid of Upper Houses. The demonstrations of the division are, however, not confined to the Tories. There is confusion in all other parties. Mr Bright ought to be convinced, now, that Radicalism is a silly and helpless theory, unless it be organised into compactness: and the "Irish party" must see that against the present Government the tactics of intimidating a Cabinet out of Tenant Right are not absolutely certain of success. But the triumph of the Government is not so clear as the disaster to Lord Derby; votes were given in many cases on some understanding that everything was to be made right in the Committee. The cries of "divide, divide," when Sir Charles was "summing up" (fancy that!) on Thursday, and the yawns when Lord John was talking his commonplace on Friday morning, were no signs of a strong Government, which at least gets respect to its face. The jeering laughter which was brought out by Mr Disraeli's ironical references to the Reform Bill, on which the Cabinet is supposed to be divided in advance, was no intimation that Lord John and Lord Aberdeen are greatly

reverenced for restraining their natural instincts—to fly apart. A whipper-in knows best when Government is strong; and Mr Hayter will tell you of what he went through during these Indian debates:—he went on his knees to beseech men not to speak, and other men for God's sake to come and keep a House; and he was treated abominably. He has given away this week a fabulous number of gaugerships and clerkships, and yet he could not get the commonest attention,—and he begins to notice that buttons are just now very badly sewn on Coalition coats, which may be because of the turning.

The India debate of June will be remembered for two of the greatest speeches delivered of late years in the House of Commons,—Mr Bright's and Mr Disraeli's, both this week. Great in their complete contrast to one another, Mr Bright and Mr Disraeli were the only orators who, in these discussions, filled the House, or in the least excited it,—a proof that it is an assembly which, certain general rules being observed, admits of success to vast variety of style. Mr Bright succeeds because he is so intensely English, earnest, and natural; Mr Disraeli is a House of Commons hero, because he is so magnificent an actor, so superbly historical and impartial, and so elegantly artificial. Mr Bright is the most English-looking man I ever saw, and Mr Disraeli the least English-looking man I ever saw; and the characters correspond to the looks: they view public life from completely different points, and they deal with every subject in a totally different manner. Their *morale* is as different as their style is; and it is, consequently, of some interest to study (it is recommended to rising men) how the same position could have been got by each in the House of Commons, where, after Mr Gladstone, they are now the two greatest personages, with the two greatest futures, of any men of their time. Mr Bright and Mr Disraeli went into the same lobby on India, because the one looked at India like an honest Englishman, anxious that England should do her duty there; and the other, like an intelligent foreign gentlemen, learned in the Asian mystery,



fully cognisant of British peculiarities in India, and sympathising more with the 150,000,000 Hindoos than with the 650 members of the House of Commons who do not like trouble, or even than with the English nation, which knows nothing of, and (he supposes) cares as little for, the 150,000,000. On foreign politics, that foreign tone of Mr Disraeli is, with all his art, perceptible; Mr Roebuck detected and denounced it when, in the debate on Lord Palmerston's Don Pacifico quarrel, Mr Disraeli hinted with insufficient melancholy that a league of Cambray was getting up against the Venetian constitution; and it was very perceptible on Friday evening that he was not an ardent admirer of Great Britons in their relations with Hindoos. And while exciting this suspicion in the patriots who dine with East India directors or rare stock, or have the routine British faith that Great Britain is a blessing to those she conquers, he did not win that enthusiasm from Mr Bright's party which was raised by the passionate and magnificently manly declamation of Mr Bright. Perhaps Mr Disraeli cared as much for English as Hindoos; but his tone was the tone of a man talking and acting history from the mere artistic point of view, coldly and critically destitute of the human passions which give an interest in humanity. It is one advantage of a Jew gentleman to be a gentleman without a country (as Sidonia is made to suggest), and it gives a strange power to Mr Disraeli as a speaker in the House of Commons. But the secret of the power seems to be beginning to be understood, and it is a question if, when the truth is detected, the man who can be thus impartial and critical can expect again to head an English "party," which, whatever its cry, exists on the condition of being blindly patriotic. On the other hand, earnestly honest Englishmen like Mr Bright would seem to be at the same disadvantage; for give Mr Bright his way, which is to let the natives have theirs, and where would the Indian Empire be? He talked in his vehement way, on Monday, of "eternal justice;" but British statesmen can scarcely afford the luxury—it isn't "practical." So that,

of the two, Mr Disraeli's point of view may, in the end, be the most business-like. But a better statesman than either is Sir James Graham, who on Monday joined in the debate, and talked affable technicalities, which patriot members, though they wouldn't stay to hear, took care to read, and which influenced the votes Mr Disraeli and Mr Bright lost. Cursed with no comprehensive mind, little history, and a sluggish political conscience, Sir James sees only what it is "to the purpose" and "practical" to see; and as far as he could see about the 150,000,000, why his right honourable friend, the President of the Board of Control, seemed quite good enough for them. (Hear hear, from Sir Charles Wood.) Therefore the House divided for Sir James Graham's plan, which was not, as Mr Disraeli proposed, to substitute elastic bands for the red tape performing Thuggee on India, and not, as Mr Bright proposed, to hand the 150,000,000 a scissors; but to change the knot. Sir James is celebrated for that plan; and is ever ready to be Thug on any subject in any department. By the playful smile on his copious countenance you can see his desire that the party should be at least comfortable.

It may be taken for granted that the great debates of the session are over with that on India.

## CHAPTER XXIII

Morning Sittings—The Eastern Question—Indian Director  
Qualification

*July 16.*

THE conversation, on Thursday night, between Lord John Russell, Mr William Williams, and Mr Milner Gibson, was very indicative that we are in July: the inquiry being—when will the innocents be massacred? Herod Lord John not being quite able to say: while assistant “Leader” Lord Palmerston is found, at a later hour the same evening, recommending suicide, as likely to promote business, to the independent members who have “notices” for Wednesdays. When it was ascertained that the India Bill was safe—the safety of the Budget having been already assured—the session inevitably was marked out for the dulness which attends the execution of formalities—the completion of a routine in which no more room is left for party risks: and “at this period,” as almanac writers would say, members of narrow chests and small heads begin to discover that morning sittings are preferable to evening sittings, that the enlightened Senate is too much given to talking, and that, generally, the House of Commons does not comprehend the best methods of doing business—remarks never made, not even by Mr Ewart who, though he never got a hearing, could always find satisfaction in conscientious listening, when the House came fresh to the full swing of the “noble competition” of parties. No doubt, when the orators go out, and the business members come in, it is very heavy work: when Brotherton is in the ascendant, we know the nation is getting on; but we are not amused: and in the “club” view of the House of Commons, the William Brown class

are bores; though to no class is the country—which, however, has very little to say in the matter—more extensively indebted. How is it to be expected that the young patrician, disgusted both with the season and the session, or the *dilettante* Mr Ewart class, perpetually in search of first principles, and taking the pedantic view of human progress, should find an interest in a morning sitting? A morning sitting is like a committee meeting on the stage of a theatre in the daytime: the groups get light through the gallery skylights; there is a musty smell of properties and a clammy sensation of dauby side-scenes; and everybody looks dismal, and hideously out of place. The House in the daytime is like a theatre in the daytime: you can't get over the conviction, that it is only rehearsal before you; and you miss the lights and the spangles; and cannot get up the delusion which after ten at night impresses you with the belief that the greatest national Senate in the world is acting and speaking history. The young patricians, consequently, stay away; the debaters shut themselves up over their blue-books, correspondence, and *impromptus*; the *dilettante* M.P.'s devote themselves to calculating what they will save in their yearly incomes by the new cab regulations; and Great Britain is handed over to James Wilson, Joseph Brotherton, and William Brown. And when the morning sittings set in, the business members get an impetus which carries them predominant over the evening sittings too; the character of the session changes; work is got through, and debating is suppressed. And then, when people are merely bored, they fancy they are over-worked; and intolerable twaddle is talked, and even written, on that point. There is no reason whatever why Parliament should not sit the whole year round; in this age of railways and electric telegraphs all recesses are lunacies, but the long recess of six months is only to be regarded as a wide national mischief. Parliament tries to do in four months the work of a year, and it does its work badly in consequence; and clearly would enjoy better health, make better speeches, and take more cheerful views, if it sat all the year round, and divided the

day, like other men of business, in a rational and easy manner. But the talk of over-work is absurd; absurd in a leading journal which is got out by men who work every day as hard as Mr Gladstone works in the session, and who do that work the whole year round. It is absurd—because the talk is generalised, as if the House, in the aggregate, suffered equally; as if all members worked alike; and as if the same members were always “the House.” The work that is got through without fatal effects, in a session, could be got through in a year. Undoubtedly a Minister, when his department is involved, must keep his brain and body at full stretch to keep pace with the necessities of Government. But, excepting Mr Gladstone and Mr Wilson, Sir Charles Wood and Mr Lowe, Lord Clarendon and Sir James Graham, which of the Ministers can be said to be laborious or laboured? Lord Aberdeen has not got the nature which would feel the killing excitement of work if he had it; Lord John’s great grievance is that he is idle; Lord Palmerston is too clever a husbender ever to have the sensation of being tired. And ask those who are worked if they do not enjoy it? Great labour at great posts is great happiness; and the sensation of mental satisfaction (men get used to the fidgetiness of responsibility) is in itself a preservative of health; while, as a rule also, hard work is the cause of good health, inasmuch as hard work involves the most careful regularity of regimen and habit. Well, is the Opposition over-worked? Mr Disraeli now leads as easy and graceful a life as any man in London; if Sir John Pakington were not kept scribbling and talking, he would be miserable; Mr Walpole is breaking down because he has nothing to do; if Mr Bright were not chained at the oar, at the club he is beginning to like, he would be throwing off his superabundant energy just as forcibly somewhere else. Take the mass of members—those who have trades, and professions, and callings, beyond the House, and who make money and keep the Senate going at the same time; which of them could not, if he would, lessen his labours? Who would accept the Chiltern Hundreds, or



isn't a happier man because of the House? But the late sittings! Sitting up till two and three never did anybody any harm yet, if there was average sleep enough afterwards; young ladies do it all through the season; fast young gentlemen all the year; and as there are only four night sittings in the week, no member ever suffers to an extent to justify complaint from that cause.

Parliament is all the more dull at present that the excitement about the war has gone off. Parliament might consent to Lord Clarendon's interment—in a sack in the Bosphorus—of “national honour”; but why should Parliament be sentenced to play the mutes on the occasion? If not a war, why not let Parliament have a talk about war? That was Mr Disraeli's entreaty to Lord John on Thursday; but no—Lord John didn't think a key necessary where there was no “dead lock”; he and Lord Clarendon and Lord Aberdeen could arrange easily for the self-governed country which is in profound ignorance of what is going on—much obliged to Mr Disraeli and Mr Layard all the same. Lord John had oddly demonstrated *his* fitness to settle the imbroglio. On the Thursday he had to apologise for a gross blunder which he had made on the preceding Monday. According to Lord Clarendon on Tuesday (and *en passant*, it may be said that nothing more ungraceful, undignified, or more unintellectual, than Lord Clarendon's matter and manner in answering questions can be conceived), Lord John, on Monday, had given an opinion about the last Nesselrode note without having read the note! Mr Disraeli, on Monday, put a certain interpretation on that note, Lord John repudiated the interpretation; Lord Clarendon corrected him, and with cutting courtesy Mr Disraeli, on Thursday, makes Lord John apologise! The apology was that he had only seen the note in a newspaper, and very hurriedly; which amounts to this, that Lord John is not quick in conception, for which he begs the House he leads to be good enough to excuse him! which the House did; Lord John, with characteristic self-complacency, not perceiving the conspicuous absurdity of his position and his confession. The House did excuse

him, because the position of the House is still more ludicrous—seldom knowing anything of foreign affairs, and of this particular foreign affair being assiduously kept in the dark: the excuse in the present case being very magnificent—that if it talked much about the matter, it might provoke a war; to which the enlightened House, like the enlightened country, is holily averse. Lord John's blunder led to this—that for twenty-four hours the nation was misled on a most vital point; and surely that is a circumstance which, by-and-by, when the House begins to perceive the point, will justify a little complaint? Lord Palmerston was sitting by Lord John when Lord John blundered; why did not Lord Palmerston, who is quicker, correct Lord John? It is quite the rule for one Minister to make fun of the other, behind the other's back; no doubt Mr Disraeli and Lord Palmerston, when they met in the dining-room, had a confidential grin at the leader's ignorance of Russian diplomacy; but it is not even out of order for one Minister to correct another, before the other's face. As, for instance, on Monday, when that first-class Minister and responsible statesman, Sir Charles Wood, received from Lord John Russell the greatest snub on record. The discussion was on the India Bill: Sir Charles and Mr Lowe against the India Reform Society—these being the only two parties who are taking the slightest notice of the legislation for the 150,000,000 “fellow-subjects, sir!” Mr Bright leading the India Reform Society, with a vehement and unaffected contempt for Sir Charles Wood, which intimidated Mr Lowe, was urging that that portion of the third clause should be omitted which enacted that the nominee directors, to be created under this Bill, should be required to possess the same property qualification in India stock as is to be possessed by the ordinary elected directors. His reasons for this were cogent and complete; it was twelve o'clock, and there was a tolerable House of members who had nothing else to do, and had thought they might as well “look in”; and Mr Bright's reasons were cheered: it is Tory tactics now to cheer Mr Bright whenever he is bullying a Minister, which he generally is.

Sir Charles Wood is remarkable for his fondness for *w*'s when he talks, and his answer was something like this:—  
 ‘Pwoow pwoow—wi dwont agrwee withw those honwblwe gentwlemwen. Verwyw nwecwesswssarwy thwawt thwerweshwoulwd bwe cwommwunwity ofw intwerweswts betweenw allw thwe dwirwectwors. Swuggewstwion qwitw awbswurwd.’ (Hear, hear, from Mr Lowe.) But several gentlemen agreed with Mr Bright, and said so; and a good deal was said about the general absurdity of property qualifications; so that when Mr Bowyer got to talk the Radicalism of that point, he was called to “Question.” “That is the question,” said Mr Bowyer,<sup>1</sup> sitting down timidly and ashamed. “The question is,” said Mr Bouverie, in the chair,—so and so:—“will the honourable gentleman divide?” “Why,” said Mr Bright, “it is really of the utmost importance: I beg the President of the Board of Control will think over the matter.” The idea of Sir Charles thinking! he crossed his arms resolutely and murmured, “Pwoohw—pwoohw:” Mr Lowe “hear—hear”-ing him. “Then I’ll divide,” said Mr Bright, sullenly. The Tories cheered: Lord John just woke up from a deep sleep,—Sir James Graham, Lord Palmerston, and Sir William Molesworth (of course) were stretched snoring by his side,—and catching a suspicious smile on Mr Disraeli’s face, he inquired what was going on, was informed, and parted the cries of “Divide—divide,” by getting on his legs—Sir Charles wondering,—Mr Lowe respectful. “Ah—I think there is—ah—much weight to be attached to what the honourable member for Manchester says—ah—” (cheers from Mr Blackett, “Hear, hear,” from Mr Bright). “I should have been—ah—glad—if—ah—there had been a—ah—more general expression of—ah—opinion on the point: but, as the House has not expressed its opinion generally, I—ah—think the suggestion of—ah—the honourable member—had better be agreed to.” (Cheers from the India reformers and the Tories, Sir Charles Wood’s head

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Geo. Bowyer, M.P. for Dundalk. A jurist and a representative Catholic. He became estranged from the Liberal party in his later years. He died in 1883.

in his papers, Mr Lowe making for the door.) Mr Disraeli saw that Lord John had seen his intention, and congratulated the Government on their admission of an error, smiling sarcastically, but unable to catch the buried eye of Sir Charles, whose mortified glance he would have enjoyed—all in the “noble competition” of parties. The words Mr Bright objected to were accordingly omitted: the clause, as amended, was agreed to, Sir Charles not saying a word; Mr Lowe astutely not re-appearing. Well, Ministers no doubt have to endure snubs in private, but was there ever such a snub offered in public? except, perhaps, Lord Aberdeen’s to Lord John, in the Monsell correspondence: this being Lord John’s retaliation, perhaps, on his next colleague in rank. You would conclude that Sir Charles would resign that night, and have a correspondence with Lord Aberdeen, and arrange to go back with colours flying in the face of imperturbable Lord John. But not at all; this sort of thing is *selon les règles* in a coalition; the rebuff positively did for Sir Charles Wood; when the India Bill was next on (Thursday), he was even respectful to Mr Bright, less flippant with his w’s; and actually adopted a suggestion made by Mr Bright—that old India merchants should be eligible with old India officials, for the nominee Directorship—adopted it with alacrity—perhaps, because he saw that Lord John, aroused by Mr Bright’s emphatic elocution, was making inquiries what was going on.

## CHAPTER XXIV

Layard on the Eastern Question—The “Business” Member—The Nunneries Inspection Bill—The India Bill—Individuals and Systems

*July 23.*

MR HENRY DRUMMOND gave expression to a universal feeling in the House of Commons when he, last evening, suggested that there was no particular reason, beyond the traditional custom, why the Senate should have its session in summer. That is an opinion which the alternate oven heats and lukewarm shower-baths of this present metropolitan July inevitably provoke; and though Mr Drummond was intercepting the talk about the Turkish imbroglio, he was yet cheered when he succinctly pointed out that rational people generally contrived to live in the country in the summer, and in towns through the cold season. There were even, from ambitious but exhausted senators, cries of “Why not all the year round?” when Mr Drummond was proffering the alternative of winter to summer, and these cries surely told how extensively the remarks made in this place, last week, on the subject have influenced House of Commons opinions. Mr Drummond took the air of a man who was being emphatically logical—who had made a strange discovery, and had no doubt that he had only to suggest to lead the reform. But he was very incomplete; and managed, first, by the awkward moment he selected for his essay, and secondly, by the narrow views he represented, so to subordinate what should have been a great subject, that Lord John, as “leader,” was enabled to snub him, and to cut the topic in three minutes’ jesting allusions. Now, the suggestion,



good because the most advanced of the kind yet made, should not be slighted nor overlooked. The Reformers are bound to consider whether one point in their charter should not refer to the inconvenient system of the "sittings" of Parliament. Mr Drummond is quite right—the whole of the summer should not be spent by the governing classes in the most sultry and bakey city in Europe. But it does not follow, that if you don't take the whole summer you must take the whole winter.

The question, as put here last week, is this—why should not the legislative body sit like the administrative power?—why should not Parliament sit like the law courts—through the year, with several short vacations, and one long summer recess? A self-governed people, as the great British people invariably represent themselves to be to benighted and oppressed foreigners, are interested in a question, the due discussion of which might lead to a new system, whereby there would be a constant visible senate—not a mere spring and summer senate, coming in with the exhibitions,—and a senate which the self-governed people would have the perpetual liberty to petition, which our self-governed people obviously cherishes as a great constitutional privilege.

It is a rare privilege, as was illustrated in Mr Layard's interpellations last night,—a privilege which the French and Russians don't enjoy, though they do appear to have Executives which are confidential with their respective nationalities—to be able to ask questions of a responsible Government,—although the responsible Government may not choose to answer them. People who are not Great Britons regarded Mr Layard's attitude, and the attitude of the inquisitive House, last evening, as pre-eminently ludicrous; but then, perhaps, they cannot appreciate the spirit of the Constitution. For a whole summer have Russia and England, and Russia and France, and Russia and Turkey been quarrelling; for a fortnight has there been a war—since war was commenced when Russian troops crossed the Pruth: it is acknowledged that a general war, in which this country would be engaged, and

for which we would have heavily to pay, is a very possible—nay, a very probable—event; and yet the great British people remains in profound and respectful ignorance what the quarrel is about—why there is a Russo-Turkish war—what are the chances, and what would be the justifications of a general war! It is eight or ten weeks since Mr Layard—who has been at Nineveh, and was six weeks at the Foreign Office, and consequently is supposed to know all about the Divan, and European, as well as Asian, secret influences—on the same principle which justified the Irish soldier's choice of the 1st regiment, that he would have access to the commander-in-chief—first gave notice of his intention to insist on explanations, for the benefit of a free people, from a responsible Government. Once Mr Layard's name was on the paper for that questioning, it was etiquette that he should not be disturbed, and that there should be no competition in curiosity; and the result was that, a friend having occupied the position an enemy might have taken up, Mr Layard kept off awkwardnesses from a Government at once divided and perplexed, and that, while the Government has been floundering its way to a settlement, the self-governed nation has had its funds flying up and down, great departments of its trade blocked up, and its general enlightenment all amazed in afflicting bewilderment and innocence. The interpellations last night were a solemn farce. Mr Layard, elaborately, but timidly rotund, went well through his affectations of eager interest and parenthetical indignation with Russia. Yet after the enormous preliminary, in which patriotic impertinences to Russia were discreetly uttered, the great question merely resolved itself into the standing interrogation—when would the noble Lord, the member for the city of London, be good enough to name a day? Deep silence—solemn silence: the noble Lord rises, puts his hat on the table, crosses his arms, and announces—(as he talks in a low voice, some one cries, "Speak up!")—that the negotiations (St Petersburg being such a distance from Downing Street!) had in reality only just commenced,

that in these circumstances Her Majesty's Ministers asked for the confidence of the House—that France and Russia might appeal to their nationalities if they liked—“ostentatiously,” said Lord John, thinking he was sneering—but that it was the custom of the British Government never to consult the British nation till the matter was settled; that the best preparation for war was an exhaustion of entreaties for peace—(cheers, the House thinking they had got a *mot*)—and that the British Government had not yet nearly done entreating. But, concluded Lord John, tightening his arms, broadening his words, lifting his voice, and looking confidential, if we fail in preserving peace, and war becomes inevitable (he was glad to say France was on our side), why then her Majesty's Ministers would appeal with confidence to the House to defend the national honour—otherwise pay for what they couldn't help! It was a melancholy exhibition for a British Senate and a British statesman, who was once a great, hearty Englishman; but the House cheered, cheered loudly, and broke up into the lobbies and dining-room, and passed on to orders of the day with complacent satisfaction that this great nation was going on “all right.” “See what it is,” members said, “to have a broad-bottom Government, including so many reliable men; see what trust can be placed in them. Why, if Derby was in, we couldn't rest in our beds.” Doubtless Lord Derby would have been more rash than Lord Aberdeen; but that might be because, after all, he would be more English. It is remarkable that Russia only consents to negotiations when she ascertains Lord Palmerston has seized a predominance in the Cabinet—a new fact for Mr Urquhart.<sup>1</sup>

Weary, very weary, has the session become; heavy, very heavy, are the complaints of members, even the committeeless members, at the never ending, still beginning, sittings. But for last night there would not have been an incident to relieve the plodding monotony of an over useful week; and no one feels dulness more than the “business men”—these being the men who are

<sup>1</sup> David Urquhart, a well-known Turcophile, and an assailant of Palmerston.

sitting the session out—who are in their places at twelve, or available for discussion and division up to four, who between four and six, get a trot to their lodgings or their clubs to keep abreast of their correspondence, who are in their places again at six, asking or "hear-hear"-ing questions till seven, who then plunge dyspeptically, for a cut at a lukewarm joint, into the dining-room, and who afterwards, between eight P.M. and two A.M. in the morning, are assiduously "about" the House, getting through and pushing through "business"; all this while the debating class not turning up at all, except between six and seven, to see if there's anything about Russia. Great should be the acknowledgments of the nation to the "business men"; no other country but England could produce such senators; and it happens that the national acknowledgments of their virtues are very insufficient. In that capital club, the House of Commons, every man knows every other man, and precise estimates are taken of each by all: and the debaters genuinely appreciate and admire the men who could be debaters, too, if they liked, but who suppress all vanity and a good deal of ambition, and who take the quiet *rôle* of the "useful members," simply because they know that character is the most respectable, risking with great moral courage the suspicion which invariably attaches to the useful member, that he is too lenient to Government, for, of course, if this class did not co-operate with the Government, whose special business it is to invent and carry forward business, nothing whatever would be done. See, they have worked this week, on an average, eighteen hours a day, for it should be remembered that there is never a play without a rehearsal, and that to prepare for the work in the House work outside is required. You always get a good deal of work out of a new Parliament in its first session; firstly, because men are not sick of the kind of work; secondly, because constituents who have always a relay of unappointed deputations in London, to look after the members, invariably find out the merit of industry, which always looks like integrity; and a man's performance in his first session generally fixes or unfixes

his position in his seat. Notwithstanding the demirep conspiracies of Derbyism, it was said at the time that the last general election had returned, on the whole, an improved class of members. It has not proved true with regard to debaters; there is no new prominent name this session. But it has proved quite true with regard to the second rank of House of Commons heroes; and true of all parties—even of the unbusiness-like parties—the Irish party and the Radical party; the two day sittings this week on the Landlord and Tenant Bills, showing that Irish members can be as sedate, practical, and rapid in committee as English members; and the debates, in committee, on the Succession Tax, when Radicals had to defend the Government against the country gentlemen, being decidedly creditable for temperate argument, and a tone of dignity, the result of complete knowledge, being imparted by the elastic-minded and ever-ready Chancellor of the Exchequer. The “Irish party”—that *party, par excellence*—has done much this week to counteract the disgustful impressions provoked by the conduct, earlier in the session of the Irish members *en masse*: wisdom and tact, of the most remarkable kind, have been shown by such men as Mr Duffy, Mr Sergeant Shee, Mr Lucas, Mr Tristram Kennedy,<sup>1</sup> and Dr Brady,<sup>2</sup> in fighting, not the Government, but the jealous landlord interest, on the Tenant Right question—a question now it appears confessed, to be carried, like other social reforms, not by *coups*, but by instalments. And as to the Radical members, it is not invidious to point out several whose personal characters and demeanours tone down the “flightiness” of the whole party: the great deficiency of the Radical party—a deficiency, because they have to deal with an aristocratic club—was in “gentlemen”; and Lambeth may be complimented on the choice of Mr W. A. Wilkinson,<sup>3</sup> Newcastle-on-Tyne on that of Mr Blackett, and Bath on that of Mr Phinn—all three successes in their first session. The mere talkers, of all parties, have been unpopular in the House during the whole session; and only very crack talkers indeed would

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Louth.<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Leitrim.<sup>3</sup> M.P. for Lambeth.

*Now in Phinn — H. C. in the D. N. T.*



be endured in July. The session is now given up to the business men: they are masters of the House, and the House, at their dictation, puts debaters down, and forbids debates. Speeches have been inexorably forbidden (until last night, when speeches conveyed news) all this week. The two most powerful classes in this country—the attorneys and the newspapers—were competing in the House, on Wednesday, for a remission of taxation; and both classes are largely represented, and by debaters; yet the House would hear neither side; but, having got Mr Gladstone's decision in favour of the newspapers, insisted on an immediate division. The same day, the Nunneries Inspection Bill was on. A month ago, there was agitation, excitement, even passion about this bill. There was a debate as eager and earnest as has been heard for years in the House of Commons. But the adjourned debate on Wednesday was the languor of a *pro formâ* put-off. Mr Drummond was, out of habit, eccentric; but the tumbling was the tumbling of a tired acrobat. Mr Whiteside was bigoted out of a narrow nature; but he limped in his declamation, and stumbled against ceaseless cries of "Divide." The rest of the speakers were of the fifth-rate class,—the first class saw that there was not sufficient interest left to make it worth their while to risk position by oratory on such an equivocal theme. Oddly enough, however, the debate was again adjourned—as if the House wanted to hear more! This was Lord Palmerston's cleverness—which is always the more conspicuous that he is always unscrupulous—a great point in "management." By inducing an adjournment he suspended the whole question till next session: and your Whig statesman always thinks he wins when he gains a session. Next year the difficulties will have accumulated; Christian bigotry, rested in the recess, will be rampant in time for all uncharitableness next session; and we shall then have another struggle before we see this Protestant proposal put in the mild shape it had assumed on Wednesday—that it be referred to a committee of inquiry,—meanwhile government in Ireland being rendered more and more

difficult, and pious society in England more and more ridiculous.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer profits by this legislative weariness. Perhaps he will not quite escape an exposition from Mr Disraeli of the collapse in the city of his commutation scheme. But, *ad interim*, he travels rapidly through his Budget. He puts people down with great force; and is it not excusable, after such a session, of the epic of which he has been the hero, and the work of which he has got through with unparalleled success, he should now and then lose his temper? He was answering Sir John Pakington on Monday on the Succession Duty; Sir John wished to explain, and removed his hat, the signal that he was going to rise. "No, no," exclaimed Mr Gladstone, gesturing at Sir John with mesmeric passes, "don't, don't; it's quite unnecessary; you are wasting the time of the House." Sir John stared, but kept still; the country gentlemen murmured indignantly; the House smiled and wondered. It is not usual, that sort of treatment of an Opposition "leader," but it's very natural—Mr Gladstone is wearied of Sir John, and his intellect revolts at the dullness of these squires, and at the glaring political selfishness which they shamefully attempt to perpetuate, in resisting a tax when it touches themselves, which for years they have sedulously and contentedly imposed on personal property. At anyrate the broken and scattered Tory cohorts have to endure a scorn from the man whom they attempted to thrust out of the Carlton, and whom they hate with a concentrated hate—more malignant even than the hatred they bore to Peel when they were baffled by that glorious renegade; and it is also clear that the House, which notices the irritation of Mr Gladstone's manners, is daily more and more content with and indulgent to the Finance Minister: the debaters, because he is in the first rank of their class—equal to Disraeli and Palmerston; the business men, because he is unweariedly laborious, conscientiously minute, and miraculously quick; all, because intense earnestness, which is his forte, carries all before it. Not content with the weight of his Budget, he has super-

added other work, which other men would have left to subordinates. It was, no doubt, violent pressure on the part of his colleagues which induced him to give up the Savings Bank Bill on Thursday; and his undertaking it at all testifies to a conscientiousness which Sir Charles Wood would find it difficult to understand—Sir Charles having been chosen Finance Minister when the plunderings of these banks occurred, and having remained Finance Minister several years afterwards, without stirring an inch to protect the classes interested. The different *morale* of Sir Charles Wood is amply illustrated in his conduct of the India Bill, as, indeed, is also, in the committee debates, his inferior character, for it is painfully plain that he talks without influence, and leads without control—the conversationalists on both sides treating him with unaffected and perhaps unconscious contempt. As indicated here last week, Lord John Russell gave Sir Charles no aid to useful position in conducting the Bill; when Sir Charles' own chief snubbed him, it was not likely that great delicacy would be shown by Mr Bright, or that the nabobs, who have come out in the committee, and are lively in the dog-days, would be deferential to a man whose palpable meagreness of Indian knowledge they detect and despise. The Government, in fact, has been represented more by Mr Lowe than by Sir Charles; Lord John, not Sir Charles, has been talked at on the great points; and Mr Bright has been kept off chiefly by Sir James Hogg, who is the dignified and declamatory champion of the Company, and who is always discovering with "deep regret and astonishment"—Sir James Weir Hogg, with the traditions of the India Bar, is given to expansive phrases—that Mr Bright's tendency in committee discussions is to be personal. Mr Bright is so, and has always been; and his power in the House and in the country is the consequence. His life has been passed in a guerrilla warfare—would it had been at the head of a more organised corps!—against infamous political systems; and the condition of success, as in other guerrilla warfare, was the constant capture of chiefs. He was wrong not to give up the name he alluded to on Thursday night,

he is wrong not to tell all he knows of individual and private influence in connection with the Indian question; for Sir James would be more grieved and more astonished than ever, to learn that Mr Bright's fault in the India Bill agitation was, that he had not spoken out sufficiently. Both he and Mr Wilkinson—Mr Bright's authority—should at once have declared their facts for this strong assertion of the prevalence of speculation in the Indian system; and though very little was lost by the delay of a day (till last night), when both honourable gentlemen behaved well—Mr Wilkinson, for a not well-known and not practised member, and in a very painful position, with wonderful tact and temper—the objection remains to their behaviour—that on the second day they practically left the matter where it was on the first—that is, they left the House without the “name,” and still enable the virtually-indignant Directors and their sycophants waiting presidential governments (as, for instance, Lord Jocelyn), to ride off upon a general denial to a general charge—the one, for the ignorant public, being just as trustworthy as the other. Messrs Bright and Wilkinson will perhaps have succeeded in deepening the universal but vague impression that India is plundered and marketed by Indian “authorities”; but when they had an opportunity of pressing such an accusation home, to the complete explosion of a disgraceful accusation, it was a mistake in tactics not to have the original accuser (Mr Wilkinson's brother) brought to the bar, and there questioned, whether it were more honourable to continue to withhold a name to the concealment of which his “personal honour” was pledged, or to succumb to the command, if it should be issued, of a House composed of honourable men, and able to judge whether the rule as to “personal honour” was not susceptible of exemptions. At anyrate, Mr Bright should have managed better than to let Lord John, who was terrified at the consequences of an earnest inquiry, shelve the accusation on the plea that it was too “general” to be entertained against a body so renowned for honour as the East India Directors! The House didn't believe the denial—did not

rely on Lord John's plea—had, in short, a strong tendency to believe unreservedly the obviously veracious Mr Wilkinson—yet the House allowed this grave business to be thus immorally shirked ; and that would not have been the result if Mr Bright had been in his average defiant mental condition.

Fix the responsibility of a system on individuals, and you reform the system ; to attack a corporation or a Wehmgericht, is to attack an abstraction—for more than Thurlow's excellent reasons. "Name, name," should be the Radical cry, while Radicalism has work to do ; and Mr Bright is in error to be considerate. It will be curious to observe the results of the appointment of the committee, obtained by Mr Bright himself, to inquire into the conduct of the Earl Fitzwilliam<sup>1</sup> in the Peterborough election. If the committee report that this peer did violate a principle of the constitution,—what then ? Even if the report be mild and forgiving, a great gain is still secured ; a precedent at which every peer may tremble. If Earl Fitzwilliam, a Whig lord, be checked in doing what he likes with his own, can Tory lords escape ? Lord John, who has a nephew returning three members to the House of Commons, assented to the committee ; but did Lord Palmerston—Lord Palmerston, who contested Sligo the other day with a Lord of the Treasury ? Mr Bright, in fastening on an individual to illustrate a system, advanced incalculably the cause of Reform. But he should follow up that bold stroke, he should arrange for Radical claqueurs to cry ceaselessly "Name, name" ; and, when the whole peerage has been trotted through the committee corridors of the Commons, the age of rotten boroughs will have ceased.

<sup>1</sup> The third Earl Fitzwilliam.



## CHAPTER XXV

The Eastern Question—The Commutation Scheme—The Salt Monopoly in India

*July 30.*

THE Senate of this enlightened country still contentedly continues in profound ignorance of the foreign policy of the British Government; and while Russia is solving, without a reference to the West, the problem of the East the great British House of Commons is legislating, with pretentious airs of omniscient power, on—cabs, accidents in mines, the truck system, and a new Westminster Bridge. That is the business week. Parliament sits through July, not because Russia is menacing, but because points as to hackney carriages, mine accidents, dog-carts and the new road to Lambeth, have to be settled. Russia crosses the Pruth—the British Government crosses Westminster Bridge, Turkey may be destroyed—the House of Commons must nevertheless legislate upon the “back fares” of metropolitan cabs. Mr Disraeli taunted Peel that he was degrading the House of Commons into a vestry; he might suggest to the Coalition that it leaves to the Senate topics less noble than those which are familiar to tap-rooms.

The conduct of the Government and of Parliament in relation to that question now raised by Russia, and on which the future of Europe so vitally depends, is alike unprecedented. From the beginning of the negotiations to the end, the Government, which had Lord Redcliffe<sup>1</sup> to supply facts, and Lord Palmerston to supply comments, has been fully cognisant of the real designs, and of the settled purpose of Russia. The lobby and the club talk

<sup>1</sup> Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, Ambassador at Constantinople.

of Members of Parliament has been consistent from the first; and it indicates a profound disbelief that anyone is in earnest but Russia, and a profound conviction that Russia will never resign the Principalities—therefore knowing that, England will not enter on a war, or even on the simulation of war. Hence a perfect agreement between the House and the Ministry that silence should be preserved; the condition of carrying the farce of diplomacy to a successful termination being that no one should be allowed to expose it. From the first to the last the intention of Government and Parliament was to dishonour England by a treachery to Turkey; and not until the perfidy is accomplished is the next act in the farce—a debate—to be permitted. Yet, if England is a consenting party to the dishonour, which she obviously is, why not? The governing classes are never ashamed to acknowledge that their tendencies are Russian. And the commercial classes, as usual, see only the immediate balance sheet, and let Lord Aberdeen understand they will not have war. They do not see that there *is* war. England commenced war when she advanced her fleet to Besika Bay. *Another two days' sail would have cost not a farthing more.* The cost of destroying the Russian fleet and Russian prestige in the East would just have been £1000, for gunpowder—or say Sir Charles Wood's salary for one year! Pity it is that the Coalition did not include a MAN—who could have taken and forced on Government, on Parliament, and on the governing classes, some such view. Who could have shown that Lord Aberdeen talked to the citizens on Saturday like a courteous old lady, hating quarrels, and not like a First Minister who holds the thunderbolts of a great nation in his hand. Who could have suggested to a timid people, making too much money and getting too high wages, that Lord Aberdeen does *not* preserve peace: that we are always at war: and that we should feel a distant war with Russia as little as we feel a war with the King of Ava. Who could have reminded Parliament that senates lost in questions as to cabs and dog-carts are losing every pretension to the fear or respect of every potentate but cab-

drivers and dog-fanciers. Elephants are, no doubt, the more admirable animals that they can rend trees and pick up pins—but if they prefer the picking up pins?

In the Lords the fact of the day is, that Lord Derby has not got a majority against Mr Gladstone's Budget. And that his party should have repudiated his lead will be less galling to the ambitious but placid orator than the still more cruel sentence—that he is, as a debater, a bore. This was signified to him sufficiently on Monday; the Lords would no longer even affect to listen to his tortuous commonplaces and rotund truisms. They yawned, they walked about, they chatted, they slept. Listen to this enlightened and chivalrous English Peer, shamefully attempting to make them "hear, hear" an argument that land should not pay the tax which personal property has long paid, they clearly would not; and they didn't care for his knowing their obstinacy. They were, indeed, as indifferent to Lord Derby talking as they are to Lord Monteagle talking; and comparison can no further go. Stung by that indifference, what could Lord Derby have thought of the division, which told him that his day was over even with his own order? Tories, to account for the destruction of the Tory party, have been assiduously saying and writing that "it's all Disraeli." But now we see that in the stronghold of Toryism, on the question on which of all questions the landlords would appear to be disposed to take the selfish, and therefore party side, Lord Derby doesn't lead 100 followers. An exploded politician—what then is to become of him? He has a refuge in the press. Great journalists, who write of statesmen without even visiting the scene of statesmanship—which is as clever as criticising theatrical performances without ever going to the theatre—sustain the old cant which was got up when Lord Derby had not yet been tried, and go through the old formulas of respectful puffing of pretentious peers—talking of this "able man," who has broken down in every function he ever assumed, and of the "brilliant speeches" which even the House of Lords will not listen to. And while the press maunders on in bolstering up his reputation among

his countrymen, Lord Derby may still have heart enough left to face the sneers and the smiles of the club—viz., Parliament. In the same way Charles Kean, having manipulated the free list, and made sure that there is not a *connoisseur* in the House, can afford to be indifferent to the stares of his brother actors.

Mr Disraeli has done a good deal this week in the endeavour to damage Mr Gladstone's reputation, political and financial. He was politely savage, on Thursday, in his opening attack; and he really seemed as if he had at last mastered the Commutation scheme, about which he was so painfully puzzled when it first appeared. But Mr Gladstone's reply, yesterday, was conclusive—winning for its candour; and he disarmed all further criticism by admitting the full extent of his failure, so far as the experiment has yet gone, while legitimately taking credit for a fair probability—that if Russia had not unsettled Europe (how the Chancellor must curse the Coalition foreign policy!) he would very likely have got the settlement he wanted on the Stock Exchange. What had Mr Disraeli to say after that? Why, nothing; and his small interjectionary protest, when the House was weary of the subject, against the reference to European disturbances, was a weakness and a piece of ill humour, visible in his bad manner, quite unworthy of Mr Disraeli. Why Disraeli, who has been studiously idle during the session, and who has passed all his legislative time in lolling on the Opposition benches, cracking jokes with Lord Henry Lennox, or in lounging about the lobbies, astonishing the inhabitants of the refreshment stands by his weird apparition, should so suddenly bristen up into malignant activity on a question on which it was impossible, however he might injure Mr Gladstone, that he could make a reputation for himself, is a perfectly inexplicable matter. There is an immemorial right in authors who have failed to convert themselves into critics; and a Chancellor of the Exchequer who brought a Ministry down with his Budget—at a season of dead principles and profound political apathy, and when a good financial scheme would even have kept the friends of Louis Napoleon, of

Stafford, and of Beresford<sup>1</sup> in power—may deem himself fully entitled to carp at a partial mistake in his too felicitous successor. Mr Gladstone, yesterday, won the personal sympathies of the House, and developed (which was desirable, for he has latterly been tediously lost in details) a perfect mastery of all the features of European finance; and as for the public—that outside the Stock Exchange—it takes men and things, in Mr Gladstone's favourite way, "as a whole," and judging him by his entire Budget, of which this scheme was a part, his countrymen have assigned to him the position they formerly gave to Peel—in a commercial nation the best financier being necessarily the first statesman.

Sir John Pakington has been more fortunate than Mr Disraeli in an Opposition function—annoying the Government. For the first time in his life (on Thursday—on the East India Company's salt monopoly) he happened to be right; and he established another precedent—for the first time in his life he happened on that day to be in a majority—two circumstances which were evidently great sources of astonishment to himself and the House, but particularly to Sir Charles Wood, who perhaps had not quite recovered by that time from his perplexity at a sage senate agreeing to raise *his* salary. Sir Charles has got so well through his India bill (nobody even taking any notice of his marvellous introductory five hours' speech, and the celebrated snub he received from Lord John, which everybody politely affected not to observe, being amply balanced by the extra salary of £1500 a year, which Vernon Smith, who is waiting for a vacancy in the Coalition, proposed, and which the House was too careless to denounce as a job, but rather permitted as a capital joke), that he was puzzled at this supplementary opposition, tagged on by Sir John, when the committee had been got through; and it was evident, from his haw-haw-ish and pooh-pooh-ish air in replying to the Droitwich baronet, that he never dreamed of the defeat that he immediately received, and which should never have been allowed, for the very reason for which the un-

<sup>1</sup> Major Beresford, Secretary at War under Lord Derby.



willing House has been intimidated into passing this wretched bill—that it weakened the moral power of England in India. The natives might not have comprehended our æsthetical difficulty about double Governments; but they understand their own politico-œconomical perplexity as to salt; and the practical effect on their minds of Thursday night's division will be this—that they will believe, with great propriety, that Parliament has rebuked the East India Company for what the ryots regard, with great propriety, as an infamous monopoly of what is in India a first article of subsistence. The result will test whether or not the House of Commons might not safely have put the Government in a minority (had it been so disposed,—which is very doubtful; for most members have relatives who hold India stock, and most members are practical men) on the main points of the bill. If we do not see a revolution, or a murder of a collector, Sir Charles Wood will have been convicted of obtaining an Act under false pretences. There are, however, other tests at work of native endurance. It appears that the India (native) newspapers are going to translate Sir Charles Wood's five hours' speech. If England retains her great dependency after that, she is sure of her for ever.

England, at anyrate, has paid India the compliment of agreeing to give a Yorkshire squire £5000 a year to govern her: of putting the Minister for India on a level with the Minister for all the colonies. Nay, Lord Palmerston, who spoke for the blushing and would-be unconscious Wood on the occasion, induced the House of Commons to consider whether it was not desirable to have in the Indian department some man, to be called a Permanent Secretary, who should know something about India! That sounds an extravagant report of Lord Palmerston; but—read his speech. He spoke for half an hour on the advantage which it would be when a Minister for India was appointed, to find in his bureau a gentleman, high in character, and reliable in tone, who could guide the Indian Minister on Indian affairs! He referred to the advantages he had experienced from such an arrangement in the Home Office,

where he was very new ; and he referred, generally, to the facilities which such a system gave to all new Governments. That is—up to this moment India has repeatedly been governed by men who knew nothing, and who, until they had educated themselves at her expense, could get to know nothing of her affairs ! What a satire, from one of our first parliamentary heroes, on our whole parliamentary system !

## CHAPTER XXVI

“Corrupt Practices”—A Parliamentary Division—Debates in the House of Lords—The House of Lords

*August 6.*

THE “intelligent foreigner”—Nicholas included in the class—cannot suppose that English attention is at all fixed on Russian affairs, if they read our parliamentary reports. The *Moniteur* makes much of the fact, that there was a Cabinet Council on Saturday, which sat four hours; but against that fact Russian diplomatists will set another—that the House of Commons sat an average of fourteen out of every twenty-four throughout the week; and that only once, incidentally, was the “difficulty” on the Pruth and the Danube referred to. What can the “despotic system” apprehend, when it sees its favourite aversion, Palmerston, placidly engaged in contesting whether he should “go on” with a Truck Act, or “withdraw” a Smoke Nuisance Abatement Bill? Can Aberdeen be supposed to be active as to Turkey, when he is found making the longest and profoundest speech which he has delivered this session, on the subject of chicory admixtures? Can Gladstone be considering the state of the East, when he is furtively attempting to pass a Colonial Church Regulation Bill, or openly exhibiting his anxiety to get the session over as soon as ever his Budget is quite through? Can Cardwell really mean resistance to Russia, when he refuses to accept Captain Scobell’s<sup>1</sup> amendment on the Pilotage Bill—intended to keep foreigners off the command of swift British steamers? Graham may be really nervous or conscientious about

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Bath.

Russia, for he is making the navy efficient, and his work lies in a defensive and preparative direction. But, watching other Ministers just now, the intelligent foreigner would come to the conclusion that England is doing anything but calculating on war. The aspect of Sir William Molesworth, for instance, during the week, particularly when asleep, has been highly pacific; for even when awake he is only describing the inroads of French fleas upon the British embassy at Paris, or questioning the financial genius of that great artist in confectionery, Sir Charles Barry. And as to Sir James Graham's secretary, the once lively and vigorous Bernal Osborne, he made his first appearance for the summer on Thursday, and then only to suggest—even in that showing an original turn of mind—that not a bad way of ventilating the House of Commons would be to open the windows—an idea which never occurred to any of the scientific “authorities”! In fact, looking not alone at Ministers, but at the confident industry with which the House wades through petty details of “business,” how is the Emperor of Russia to suppose that we are paying any attention to his movements, or how is Abd-u-l-Medjid to believe that a people so careless about a question which affects Europe so deeply can really mean to save him in his extremity? The trifling nature of the work of the House of Commons last week was moralised upon in this place with proper effect; and some reason was shown for the argument which assumes that the plan of the French Chamber to class secondary “subjects” into large committees, is very preferable to the system of talking about everything and effecting very little, which we continue to adopt. But this week the evil is more flagrantly conspicuous; and the House of Commons looks less and less dignified. The House has devoted a large share of the week to silly drivel, all about itself; at the very end of a wasted session members affecting to set about putting their House in order. Intelligent foreigners might pay us the compliment of supposing that the discussion on Thursday, in supply, on the lighting and

ventilation of the chamber, had a hidden meaning; and that the Radicals were attempting by innuendoes to advance the cause of reform.

But in various other ways has the House been confessing the absurdities of its constitution and management. Lord John Russell agrees with anyone and everyone who says or states anything to bring the House of Commons into contempt—which is a fine trait in the leader of it. For instance, he led a good cheer when the chairman in supply on Thursday came to the vote of £30,000 for the commissions of briefless barristers who have been inquiring into “corrupt practices” at various places. The barristers have been paid by the day, and, sensible fellows, they have spun the inquiries out with great adroitness; and the House was rather delighted than not at having to pay them £30,000. It’s a sum to suggest that the House (which doesn’t pay all the taxes) is really in earnest in trying to get purity. Then, on the same subject, it was incidentally mentioned that, in consequence of the refusal of the House to issue certain writs, the constitutional complement of members will be short through the recess by sixteen; and Lord John was asked if that wasn’t very dreadful: at which Lord John smiled, and said, with a laugh, he didn’t know; but that he supposed it wasn’t to be helped, if the House wouldn’t issue the writs. Then, again, when Mr Thomas Duncombe made a motion about the constitution of Election Petition Committees, stating, in a parenthesis, the enormous number of petitions against members during this Parliament, Lord John quite agreed with Mr Duncombe, and was not at all shocked at the hideous array of shameful statistics. All this is very strange in the leader of the House: and the opportunity may be taken to point out, again, how completely Lord John Russell has abnegated the functions which attach to his official or quasi-official position. It was his business as leader, as it was his tactic as contingent reformer, to use all the materials which the election petition committee’s proceedings gave him for the furtherance of real measures to



redeem the character of the House in the country : and throughout the session Lord John Russell has lazily left the whole question of electoral corruption to accident ; as, on Tuesday and Thursday, idly patronising the struggles of independent members, and loosely endorsing any sort of plan or moral, and always evidencing a very lax indifference to the whole question about which, next session, he is, as party man, to be so professionally anxious. Of the enlightened constituencies of England he leaves eight or ten unrepresented, because they are so inveterately corrupt that they cannot be entrusted with their constitutional privilege ; and we are paying briefless barristers at the rate of £1000 per week for taking evidence to confirm a conviction ; and when the astounding fact is forced on his attention, Lord John gently grins and raises that collective parliamentary hilarity which stenographers report as "a laugh." Laughing at the vice is, in this day, the best way to get at the Reform ; but what Lord John laughs at is the idea of his being at all active in doing his duty ; it not being, this year, a party necessity with the Whigs in the Cabinet to raise a Radical cry ; and even of a good simulation of earnestness next year there cannot be much hope, after the systematic conduct of Lord John, during these six months, in leaving everything to chance. Lord Brougham interjects a hope, in the Lords, that his noble friend does not mean a "large measure of Reform ;" to which hope all the Coalition lords said, "hear, hear," and to which the extremer Whig lords, who haven't got their cue, say nothing ; and Lord Brougham is very likely to be gratified. Lord John himself is not very eager to change the character of the club which cultivates politeness and so endures him ; and of the tendency of his Peelite colleagues there was an unexpected illustration in the treatment which Sir James Graham extended, on Tuesday, to Mr C. Berkeley's bill for forbidding music and banners in election contests. Sir James was astonished at such an attempt to deprive the British subject of his immemorial privilege to run candidates like jockeys—by colours—and to uphold free and

independent spirit by villainous music; Sir James was, in fact, in his way, as indignant as Colonel Sibthorp, who was very wrath; and, accordingly, Sir James leading the Ministerial side at the moment, Mr C. Berkeley<sup>1</sup> was snubbed and put down. What could the intelligent foreigner have thought of *that* debate? One half the House of Commons maintaining that this enlightened country went mad, at election times, under the influence of red silk and trumpets; and the other half of the House contending that the enlightened country liked this sort of thing, and ought not to be deprived of this—one of its public amusements!

But, finally, what would the intelligent foreigner have thought of the speech, and consequent laughter, of Sir G. Brooke, on Monday, after the division on a clause in an Irish land bill? Sir G. Brooke<sup>2</sup> complained, almost with tears in his eyes, that it was shameful—*that* it was—for the House of Commons to divide without even having heard the debate! The intelligent foreigner could hardly understand the plaint without being present; but had he been (as he could have been on Monday, when strangers, myself among them, first saw the operation of dividing), he would be bewildered at *one* of the workings of representative institutions. For the first time strangers were not ordered out on a division. Take the division in question. The clause had been discussed by a House of twenty; ten Irish "Liberal" members, who affect to bother the Government that has bought them, and ten Irish Orange members, who vote continuously against the people, and oppose every concession to the tenant, as antagonistic, which the tenant is in Ireland, to the landlord. Each of the twenty had spoken ten times (it is in Committee), and then they agreed to divide. "Division!" roar the door-keepers; the Sergeant-at-Arms rings the bell, which rings (by electricity) a dozen other bells; and "Division—division" is the cry in every room of the building. The clerk at the table puts a heavy sand time-glass on the table; it is a two-minute glass, and when the sand has run down,

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Cheltenham.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Geo. Brooke.

the doors are to be closed. But two minutes are enough. As the bells ring, members rush in, in dozens, in twenties, in fifties, in a rapid stream of M.P.-dom. Some of them have been chatting about the lobbies or in the ladies' gallery, others have been in the library, and it is only a few have been in the dining-room, for it is nine o'clock, and therefore most have been in the smoking-room. As they rush in, they are ignorant of what has been going on and what they are to divide about; but as they run they learn; a whisper or a word, as they pass some trusted friend or official, is enough, and they take the lobby that belongs to them by an instinct. On this occasion, a few Irish Orange members are opposing the Government, and for guidance to the Coalitionists, it is enough that they see where Hayter stands. Past the smiling Hayter they trot, in confident—touchingly confident—submission. In the lobby, when they have decided on their vote, they ask and hear, "What's the question?" And so well understood is the Freemasonry system of winks and nods that few have ever to regret their choice, or to record a regret. And as it was on Monday, so it is on all divisions: the majority, disgorged of the smoking-room, are ever in blissful ignorance of the debate. Sir G. Brooke was a simpleton to complain of the established system of an enlightened senate: and it was natural that Lord John, rising as leader to answer the taunt of a freshman in that knowing club should raise a laughing cheer when he said that he should be sorry to see the day when members of the House would not thus always testify their confidence in their selected chiefs. It is well understood, in and out of doors, that only once in a decade does a debate influence a division; and it would be a mere farce for all those who vote to sit through the dreary talk of over-conscientious senators, who are bores, and worse than bores, in July. But that being so, why continue the lunatic arrangements developed for the first time to the uninitiated on Monday, and carried out, to their great amazement, through the week? It's perhaps premature, though the age of talk is getting over, to suggest that senatorial orators should *write* their speeches

and send them, unspoken, to the papers. But, at least, why does not the House come to an agreement to avoid those ludicrous trots past Mr Hayter? The farce is confessed: and why not therefore a common system of proxies,—or votes by telegraph,—or by post? The House could then sit till September, and yet be on the moors or the Rhine, or the Mediterranean. To keep a House you only want 40 members; and Mr Hayter could pick up that sacred number from the Irish patriots who vote with Keogh.

Certainly, if a country, with not too many public amusements, cannot make up its mind to give up House of Commons oratory, which does provide us with occasional passages and parenthetical scenes that are more than amusing, we could afford to do without what are called debates in the House of Lords. Observe the proceedings last night, in that august but supererogatory assembly. The India Bill stood for a second reading, and the House was unusually full—that is, in addition to the steady attendance of seventeen old peers, there were ten or twenty middle-aged peers, and ten or twenty more quite young peers, who, you could see, by the attention they directed from the old peers to the young peeresses, were there more in compliment to ladies than to lords. That was a House collected for the revision of Commons legislation upon the government of “the 150,000,000 fellow-subjects, sir.” But what did it do? Why, it said, “Hear, hear,” when Lord Truro,<sup>1</sup> woefully worn out in body and mind, talked an ancient lawyer’s routineries on that question of the supply and demand world, which he has not a notion of, as it was involved in the Combination of Workmen Bill—just up, and in Lord Kinnaird’s timid hands, from the Commons. Lord Truro, obeying a tendency to consult the aristocratic suspicions of the audience he always failed with, considered it a dangerous bill; and the old peers, middle-aged peers and young peers, who didn’t know anything about the matter, were ready to

<sup>1</sup> Formerly Sir Thomas Wilde, Lord Chancellor in 1850 under Lord John Russell. He died in 1855.

agree with Lord Truro—on matters they don't know anything about, the House of Lords always agreeing to follow the grey-headed law lords, who are supposed to form a sort of link between the peers and mankind. They had no doubt whatever that the first grey-headed law lord was right when a second grey-headed law lord (the Lord Chancellor<sup>1</sup>) rose, and from similar motives and analogous ignorance, abused the bill; and the result was, that an excellent measure, embodying a good principle, and promising to act as the basis for future better measures in the same direction, was thrown out; after which the class of capitalists cannot say that the class of landowners is unsympathetic. Well, if that debate could have been prevented by an arrangement which should keep peers at, instead of in, their seats, the peers would have been, this Saturday, more popular with the democracy; for the result, without a reason offered, would have been a less impertinence to the people, and to the Commons, than such a result with such inadequate and *malapropos* reasons. Then, of course, it is obvious that it would have been an advantage to the public and to the steady attendance of old lords, if such a debate as there was last night on the India Bill could have been prevented. We submit without much murmuring to the Lords voting on what the Commons have voted; but is it not too bad to the most constitutional of us to expect us to read how the Lords debated what the Commons have already exhausted? The Commons had not left the Lords a fresh word to say on the India Bill; and yet at the India Bill the Lords went last night, as if the subject had suddenly turned up, quite new, and there was an intense eagerness to hear all about it. Constitutionally, the fiction is akin to stage asides, that the Lords never know what has passed in the Commons; and the consequence of keeping up so insane a delusion, is the farce which, neither to their dignity nor credit, the Upper House, last night, performed. Their Lordships might take this hint: that they have only one

<sup>1</sup> Lord Cranworth, formerly Baron Rolfe. He died in 1868. He was an excellent judge.



chance of prolonging, or, rather, renewing their vitality ; and that is by getting rid of the fiction—acknowledging the fact, and dividing the topics of the day with the Commons ; in other words, by anticipating the Commons in one half of its privileges—of being interesting. This lenient British age only requires its Governors to amuse it ; and the Lords could be as ludicrous as the Commons, if they would only try.

## General Remarks on the Session

*August 27.*

THERE is a remarkable consentaneousness in the comments of the journals upon the Session of Parliament which closed last week. By one and all, whatever the reserved references to the Ministers, the House of Commons, as a body, is congratulated upon the extent of the work it has accomplished, upon the manner of the performance, and generally upon its capacity to deal with and direct the complicated affairs of this enormous empire. Reading these compliments, and studying these eulogiums, it requires a mental exertion to remember, that by universal consent the next session is to open with debates upon the best method of revolutionising the House of Commons—upon the best method of obtaining Parliamentary Reform!

If it be a fact that the House of Commons is equal to its functions, and adequately reflects and expounds the wishes and the principles of the nation, why Parliamentary Reform? The indifferentism of the age is painfully illustrated in those comments of immoral British journalism, which is craftily careless of being more alert than its public. But the fact is to be faced: that it is agreed that we have seen the last session of the unreformed Reformed House of Commons; and it is a fitting period to ascertain where and what are those defects in constitution and practice which demand the remedy of a change equivalent to a revolution. Or is the defect simply in the constitution, and not in the practice? Are we going to have a revolution for the gratification of our theoretical anxieties, in despite of the perfect practical success of a theoretically bad system? On this point, perhaps, the Queen herself is unintentionally

an authority. Her Majesty closed this session with a speech from the throne unparalleled for the variety and extent of its congratulation of Parliament and country upon the actual work done: Her Majesty will open next session with a speech from the throne, in which the prominent paragraph will suggest the expediency of a consideration of certain measures framed for the purpose of remodelling this strangely admirable House of Commons. Can Lord John Russell expect that the inconsistency will escape his Queen? The whole nation must detect it; and as it is a practical nation, it may be inclined to regard Lord John as a visionary politician, risking the peace for the sake of his theories.

But there is no doubt this resource for a Ministry pledged to a measure of Parliamentary Reform—they may repudiate their speech from the throne, and laugh at the laudations of their journals; and contend that the session has been an infamous failure, and the Parliament an audacious sham. Not to take some such course leaves them in a humiliating difficulty, and strengthens incalculably the hands of those cynical statesmen who are disposed to believe that good government means as little government as possible, and that Parliaments are good or bad, not in reference to their constitution and origin, but in reference to the excellence or vice of the age in which the Parliament is placed; who, consequently, contrasting the concluding declarations of this with the initiatory demands of next session, will ridicule with effect Lord John Russell's scheme on which Lord Aberdeen is now popularly supposed to be brooding. This school of politicians had no chance in 1792 and 1830—the two eras of parliamentary reform agitations: then they were the theorists, and their assailants were the practical men. They argued that an English House of Commons was simply an assembly of English gentlemen, who, when they got together, whatever their separate origins, would, of necessity, do just what any other average meeting of English gentlemen would approve; that is, that inevitably the House of Commons would, in the end, represent with admirable accuracy contemporaneous

educated public opinion: and some of them, even so late as 1830, pushed their philosophy so far as to suggest that a good, a practical, and a patriotic House of Commons could be obtained out of an assembly exclusively nominated by the Crown. But when the people said, irrespective of the theory, "We have no faith in the House of Commons as at present constituted," it obviously became indispensable to appease the people by a change which should simulate a reform,—as in 1830. Now, however, what is to resist the reasoning of that school which disbelieves in the virtue that is to arise from closer contact between mob and parliament? The people are not demanding a Reform: the popular journals see no faults in the career of the session: Lord John Russell, therefore, committed by his Queen's speech and his newspaper pæans, must, in February, 1854, when he rises,—puts his elbows in his hands, and mentions Hampden and Sidney,—meet the question—"Why should there be a reform of Parliament? Admitted that it is not a Parliament theoretically perfect in its constitution; that, statistically, it does not represent the property, the intelligence, and the population of the country, but only sections of the property, species of the intelligence, and classes of the population; but what then—does it not work well? At least you told us so only last session." In anticipation of so natural a controversy, admirers of Lord John Russell should prepare materials to show that his last Queen's speech was a complete mistake; that, as a summary of the session, it was a wrong one.

But a similar contrast,—between ministerial satisfaction with the past and ministerial intentions for the future,—is in the session itself. Two sets of facts stand out prominent in the session: it has been a session of Bribery Committees and the Budget. The Bribery Committees prove that any one can buy his way into the House of Commons: and the Budget was based on the Succession Duty Extension Bill—a bill which annihilated class legislation, was the noblest, boldest, and most truly national piece of recent legislation. Thus, villainous as is the source, pure, so far, is the flow of the House of Commons. Again: it was a

session which commenced under the influence of, in a House selected under the influence of, a corrupt Tory Ministry; and at the end of the session we see firmly seated (on a broad bottom) in power, a Ministry whose distinction it is—the distinction of a coalition—that it is not a party and not a class Government; but that it is a British Government, pledged, in all it undertakes, to take a *national* view. Can we reconcile these contradictions; and, if we can, would not the reconciliation be fatal to the *rara avis* which is to result from our Premier's incubation? In fact, is not the existence of a Coalition Government in itself an argument against the cry of Parliamentary reform? In 1830, the reform of Parliament was said to be required to restore a balance; to make provision for the representation of those vast civic communities which had risen up since the beginning of that war, which, nevertheless, we are ceaselessly told, ruined England. A Reform Bill was required, it was also maintained less publicly, to let the Whigs have their turn at power—the Whigs having sided with the middle class against the country class, and having, consequently, according to the Whigs, been kept down by throne and peerage. But now? The civic communities are triumphant: they have carried the repeal of the Corn Laws; and they have got a representative Chancellor of the Exchequer who has put legacy duty on real property, land included. The Whigs have no complaint to make. Of the twenty years which have elapsed since the passing of that Reform Bill, which they drew up, they have been out of power only five years,—in those fifteen years having fully rewarded and enriched their party and younger sons by Government patronage; and, at this moment, no more Whigs are left—Lord John Russell having, with their consent, destroyed them. On the other hand, there is no Tory party. Mr Disraeli, who abused Sir Robert Peel for disorganising it, has destroyed it. Hence a coalition; hence, in consequence, the apparent infelicity of the period selected for a suggestion of a Reform Bill. A Coalition Government, including nearly all the reliable statesmen of the day, represents the country: the



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House of Commons supports the coalition;—therefore the House of Commons represents the country. Why, then, a Reform Bill?

There is, perhaps, an argument left for the Reform Bill. The middle classes now overmatch, or are, at least, fully equal to, the aristocratic classes in the House of Commons: if they haven't all their own way, it is simply because, little as Mr William Williams would suspect so simple a reason, they are not entitled to have all their own way—the land and landlords being still a considerable portion of the wealth and intelligence of this country. But, as between 1800 and 1832 there grew up a great anti-aristocratic middle class, insisting, when it ascertained its strength, on practical power, so between 1800 and 1853 there has grown up a great, intelligent, *wealthy* working-man class; and this class is in no sense and in no degree directly represented in the House of Commons. For this class, to introduce into the “lobby” another community to struggle with land and capital, a Reform Bill may be necessary. But that can only be a theory. This class is not demanding a Reform Bill; takes little interest in public affairs; and would not appreciate the contingent blessing contemplated by Lord Aberdeen. It is a class which has lost its faith in the possible blessings to be conferred by State interference—has lost this faith only a few years after the passing of the Act which cheapened bread and emancipated trade; and so completely is it understood and felt that our orators, and journalists, and statesmen are not to appeal to the people, which won't listen, but to “society” merely which is interested, that, notwithstanding the Coalition, nationality of aim and style are the exception and not the rule in our speeches and leading articles—which are addressed to an audience, not to a nation. This class, which is no doubt the democracy Lord Derby gratuitously undertook to put down—a St George, who set out after news had arrived of the death of the dragon—will even bear patiently and uncomplainingly the neglect, not to say the impertinence of Parliament, when its interests are concerned. This is a year of strikes; a year in which the

working classes have been intensely interested in the laws affecting combinations in reference to wages; and yet this democracy has not uttered a word in complaint of the insolence of the law lords in the Upper House, and the indifference of country gentlemen and capitalists in the Lower House in regard to that Combination of Workmen Bill which Mr Drummond adopted from Mr Hume, and which contained the beginning of a candid politico-economical legislation towards the artizan. With so enduring a democracy, which seldom reads the debates, which laughs at corruption and jokes the bribed, and which doesn't want votes, not even being eager for their market value, so flourishing is the enlightened democracy as to wages, why should a Coalition Government precipitate a reform bill? The capitalists, who have most that they want, and the aristocracy, which, *not* being led by Lord John Manners, cannot hope for allies in fustian-jacket members, must decidedly think that Lord John Russell is, as usual, energetic at precisely the wrong time. Because what may, after all, be wanted is not a reform of Parliament, but a reform of the country.

Nevertheless, a survey of the session cannot fail to suggest, that if Parliament is to be congratulated on what it has done, Parliament is to be condoled with on what it has not done. The Budget was a great measure; it manifested, in its author, a really able man, inevitably the future Premier; and its facile passage was honourable to the House of Commons. But though we are a commercial country, we cannot please ourselves with the belief that a session of nine months should be devoted merely to the gestation of a single financial measure. To test the completeness of the "business" done in the course of a session, we should—alas! for an enlightened and highly-civilised country, the investigation would be disheartening—examine the prayers of the whole number of petitions presented, and then ascertain how many of all these alleged and probably admitted grievances have been redressed. Or, as it is the fashion in this constitutional land to sneer at petitions, we could go over the list of "questions of the

day," and observe how many have been settled, or even responded to. Reduced to such tests, sorry indeed are the results of the session, which lasted from the autumn of 1852 into the autumn of 1853. We saw the Budget passed, and we saw the India Bill bustled through; some customs reform: a cab unsettlement; a wife-mangler discouragement; nationality in the mercantile navy put down; betting-houses put down to rise up again; a few grosser legal mischiefs partially remedied; the voluntary principle adopted—for Canada; transportation stopped—to Australia, not to Milbank; and that is all, literally all the results of nine months' sittings. And of one in the list it is needful to remind people that the India Bill was the bill of a bureau; that there was profound British indifference to Indian misrule; and that the bill only received the assent and approval of Parliament in the sense that Parliament stayed away from all the petty committee discussions upon it. No doubt there have been other "subjects" before Parliament. To go back: there was much public advantage derived from the debating-society sort of discussions which took place upon statute consolidation and codification; tests in the universities of Scotland and the proper curricula for the universities of England; salt monopoly of the honest East India Company in India; the smoke, filth, and pestilence of this enlightened metropolis; landlord villainies in Ireland; trustees' villainies in charitable institutions in England; families' rogueries in the ecclesiastical courts; bishops' rogueries in capitular and other estates; Jeranje Merjee and his amiable relative, Prestonjee Merjee; the Baron de Bode: magistrate recklessness with county rates; Mr Keogh's veracity; Lord John's sympathy with Jews; Lord Hotham's horror of M.P. judges (eliciting a great speech from Macaulay); that pure and honest establishment, the Irish Church; that excellent and charitable system of church rates insisted on by the Christian Establishment; the tendency of lady abbesses to starve and beat young nuns; the honourable nature of the Irish members (as sketched by Mr Duffy); the liberality of Liberal Lord Palmerston, when foreign

refugees have to be annoyed and tortured to please Absolutist courts; our Australian colonies; the virtues of the Duke of Wellington; the ignorance of this enlightened country, as admitted by everyone, in urging Lord John to go on with an education scheme; and lastly, the scoundrelism of this enlightened country, as admitted by everyone in the course of the debates upon bribery petitions, election committee reports, special commissions, and new writs. Then, to conclude, can there be a doubt that the highest national gain has been derived, in the way of instruction and increase of national self-respect, from the repeated interrogatories of independent members, and the as frequent explicit statements of Ministers, in regard to the conduct of Great Britain in her protectorate of Turkey against Russia? Did not the whole of the negotiations, the manner of conducting them, the candour with which they were confided to us by our statesmen, and the happy and honourable issue, fully demonstrate that we are a self-governed people, and that we passionately insist upon the Christian policy of peace and good-will in the East? Yet, balancing the results of the session against the length of the session, is it not clear, gratifying as it has been to have our selected representatives talking on all these mighty points, that it would have been better to have had less talk; and if there could not be more actual work, at least less time about so little? However, it is to be remembered, that this has been a session remarkable for the disappearance of the orators. A Coalition Government, which included all the great statesmen, included, as a necessity—for this is a country in which, in addition to being a sage, you must be an actor—nearly all the great orators; and the Treasury benches are not often favourable to the graces of elocution, and to the exertitions of declamatory genius. And, unfortunately, the lucrative taciturnity of the crack debaters silenced by place and their awful sense of responsibility—which crushes even Bernal Osborne—has not been compensated for by the activity of the Opposition. Mr Disraeli has looked an armoury of daggers, but spoken seldom: having no policy and no

party, he resorted to that wisdom so usual and so appropriate to men in a quandary—he bided his time. Sir John Pakington rarely summed up to the jury, which he ever believes to be before him; Mr Walpole only once got a chance of delivering a sermon, and he was irreverently laughed at for his pains. Lord Stanley, ingenuous young man, thought that if he was to be a Conservative it was his business to conserve something—so he selected church rates.

If in a week or two we have not altogether forgotten the session, placidly reposing in our constitutional recess, which was invented by our ancestors for good reasons, but is maintained by ourselves for none, we shall remember it only for one feature, that it was the session in which Parliament and people alike confessed—a confession apart from the question of Parliamentary Reform—that the House of Commons is elected by a constituency, two-thirds of which are utterly base and corrupt: the proofs of that baseness and corruption being ample and complete. And remembering this remarkable fact, we shall wonder at the easy, happy, confidence we have placed so long, and are likely so long to continue to place, in that assembly; and we shall also wonder, perhaps, at our own profound conviction that we are an enlightened nation, far away at the head of the world's civilisation. But no doubt we are very practical; we are content with our constitution; and so satisfied with our self-government that we are rejoicing at the prospect of having no control whatever over the Government until next February.

*A fine salage but (being a  
 poor writer) I can't look - one  
 of the Waltham or Waltham or  
Waltham or Waltham or  
Waltham or Waltham or  
Waltham or Waltham or*



## APPENDIX

### THE DERBY MINISTRY FORMED IN MARCH, 1852.

#### IN THE CABINET

First Lord of the Treasury . . .	Earl of Derby.
Lord Chancellor . . . . .	Lord St Leonards.
Chancellor of the Exchequer . .	Benjamin Disraeli.
Privy Seal . . . . .	Marquess of Salisbury.
Home Secretary . . . . .	Spencer Horatio Walpole.
Foreign Secretary . . . . .	Earl of Malmesbury.
Colonial Secretary . . . . .	Sir John Pakington.
First Lord of the Admiralty . .	Duke of Northumberland.
President of the Board of } Control . . . . .	John Charles Herries.
Postmaster-General . . . . .	Earl of Hardwicke.
President of the Board of } Trade . . . . .	Joseph Warner Henley.
First Commissioner of Works } and Public Buildings . . . . .	Lord John Manners.

#### NOT IN THE CABINET

Commander-in-Chief . . . . .	Duke of Wellington.
Master - General of the } Ordnance . . . . .	Viscount Hardinge.
Paymaster of the Forces, and } Vice-President of the } Board of Trade . . . . .	Lord Colchester.
Secretary at War . . . . .	William Beresford.
Chancellor of the Duchy of } Lancaster . . . . .	Robert Adam Christopher.
Joint Secretaries of the } Treasury . . . . .	William Forbes Mackenzie. George Alexander Hamilton.
Secretary of the Admiralty . .	Stafford Augustus O'Brien Stafford.

Under Secretary for the Home Department . . . . .	}	Sir William Hylton Jolliffe.
Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs . . . . .		
Under Secretary for the Colonies . . . . .	}	Lord Stanley.
Secretaries of the Board of Control . . . . .		
Lords of the Treasury . . . . .	}	Earl of Desart.
	}	Charles Lennox Cumming Bruce, and Henry James Baillie.
	}	Marquis of Chandos, Lord Henry Lennox, and Thomas Bateson.
Lords of the Admiralty . . . . .	}	Rear-Admiral Hyde Parker, C.B. ; Rear-Admiral Phipps Hornby, C.B. ; Captain Sir Thomas Herbert, K.C.B. ; Captain Hon. Arthur Duncombe and Captain Alexander Milne.
Clerk of the Ordnance . . . . .		Colonel Frances Plunket Dunne.
Attorney-General . . . . .		Sir Frederick Thesiger.
Solicitor-General . . . . .		Sir Fitzroy Kelly.
Judge-Advocate General . . . . .		George Banks.
Chief Poor Law Commissioner . . . . .		Sir John Trollope.

## SCOTLAND

Lord Advocate . . . . .	Adam Anderson.
Solicitor-General . . . . .	John Inglis.

## IRELAND

Lord Lieutenant . . . . .	Earl of Eglintoun.
Lord Chancellor . . . . .	Francis Blackburne.
Chief Secretary . . . . .	Lord Naas.
Attorney-General . . . . .	Joseph Napier.
Solicitor-General . . . . .	James Whiteside.

## QUEEN'S HOUSEHOLD

Lord Steward . . . . .	Duke of Montrose.
Lord Chamberlain . . . . .	Marquis of Exeter.
Master of the Horse . . . . .	Earl of Jersey.
Master of the Buckhounds . . . . .	Earl of Rosslyn.
Vice Chamberlain . . . . .	Viscount Newport.
Treasurer of the Household . . . . .	Lord Claude Hamilton.

Comptroller of the Household . . . George Cecil Weld Forester.  
 Chief Equerry and Clerk  
     Marshal . . . Lord Colville.  
 Mistress of the Robes . . . Duchess of Athol.

THE ABERDEEN MINISTRY AS FORMED IN  
 DECEMBER, 1852.

THE CABINET

First Lord of the Treasury . . . Earl of Aberdeen.  
 Lord Chancellor . . . Lord Cranworth.  
 Chancellor of the Exchequer . . . William Ewart Gladstone.  
 President of the Council . . . Earl Granville.  
 Privy Seal . . . Duke of Argyll.  
 Home Secretary . . . Viscount Palmerston.  
 Foreign Secretary . . . Lord John Russell.  
 Colonial Secretary . . . Duke of Newcastle.  
 First Lord of the Admiralty . . . Sir James Graham.  
 President of the Board of }  
     Control . . . } Sir Charles Wood.  
 Secretary at War . . . Sidney Herbert.  
 First Commissioner of Works }  
     and Public Buildings . . } Sir William Molesworth.  
   Marquess of Lansdowne.

NOT IN THE CABINET

Commander-in-Chief . . . Viscount Hardinge.  
 Master - General of the }  
     Ordnance . . . } Lord Raglan.  
 President of the Board of }  
     Trade . . . } Edward Cardwell.  
 Paymaster of the Forces and }  
     Vice-President of the } Lord Stanley of Alderley.  
     Board of Trade . . . }  
 Chancellor of the Duchy of }  
     Lancaster . . . } Edward Strutt.  
 Postmaster-General . . . Viscount Canning.  
 Lords of the Treasury . . . { Lord Alfred Harvey, Hon.  
   Francis Wemyss Charteris,  
   and John Sadleir.

Lords of the Admiralty .	{	Vice-Admiral Hyde Parker, C.B.; Rear-Admiral Maurice Frederick Fitzhardinge Berkeley, C.B.; Captain Hon. Richard Saunders Dundas, C.B.; Captain Alexander Milne, and Hon. William Francis Cowper.
Under Secretary for the Home Department . . . . .	}	Hon. Henry Fitzroy.
Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs . . . . .	}	Lord Wodehouse.
Under Secretary for the Colonies . . . . .	}	Frederick Peel.
Joint Secretaries of the Treasury . . . . .	}	William Goodenough Hayter, and James Wilson.
Secretary of the Admiralty .		Ralph Bernal Osborne.
Joint Secretaries of the Board of Control . . . . .	}	Sir Thomas Nelson Redington and Robert Lowe.
Surveyor - General of the Ordnance . . . . .	}	Lieutenant-Col. Hon. Lauder- dale Maule.
Clerk of the Ordnance . . .		William Monsell.
Attorney-General . . . .		Sir Alexander Cockburn.
Solicitor-General . . . .		Richard Bethell.
Judge-Advocate General .		Charles Pelham Villiers.
Chief Poor Law Commissioner		Matthew Talbot Baines.
Secretary to the Poor Law Commissioners . . . . .	}	Charles Lennox Grenville Berkeley.

## SCOTLAND

Lord Advocate. . . . .	James Moncrieff.
Solicitor-General . . . .	Robert Handyside.

## IRELAND

Lord Lieutenant . . . . .	Earl of St Germans.
Lord Chancellor . . . . .	Maziere Brady.
Chief Secretary . . . . .	Sir John Young.
Attorney-General . . . .	Abraham Brewster.
Solicitor-General . . . . .	William Keogh.

## QUEEN'S HOUSEHOLD

Lord Steward . . . . .	Duke of Norfolk.
Lord Chamberlain . . . .	Marquess of Breadalbane.

Master of the Horse . . .	Duke of Wellington.
Master of the Buckhounds . . .	Earl of Bessborough.
Vice-Chamberlain . . .	{ Lord Ernest Augustus Charles Brudenell Bruce.
Treasurer of the Household . . .	Earl of Musgrave.
Comptroller of the Household . . .	Viscount Drumlanrig.
Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard . . . . .	{ Viscount Sydney.
Captain of the Corps of Gentle- men-at-Arms . . . . .	{ Lord Foley.
Chief Equerry and Clerk Marshal . . . . .	{ Lord Alfred Paget.
Mistress of the Robes . . . .	Duchess of Sutherland.





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